

he Dark Lord's Equal  
by Lens of Sanity

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"Changing history to suit your purposes has a long and successful history" – Rorschach's Blot

June 18th 1996: Ministry of Magic, Level 9, the Department of Mysteries, Death Chamber  
20:58 Sidereal Time

I have no idea what's going on, it's chaos. Harry is twelve inches in front of me, he looks terrible, bloody slash across his face and a wild look of desperation flitting across his eyes. I am not going to let him down, he's just hit Dolohov with a Petrificus Totalus curse, Dolohov for Merlin's sake, he's something like the fourth most dangerous person in the world right now and Harry clocks him without a second thought.

I'm still recovering from this Tarantallegra, my nose and right wrist are still busted, and worse, that fucking bitch Bellatrix LeStrange is within spitting distance. Looks like Harry was right, Sirius Black really must be one of the good guys, anyone fighting that twisted wreck of humanity is alright in my book.

"Come on!" he yells in desperation, dragging me to my feet with clearly waning strength "Just try and push with your legs-"

He heaves again and my robes tear along the left seam, and we both watch in slow motion as the small spun-glass ball drops to the ground. In an unholy turn of events my left foot gives one final involuntary kick just at the wrong moment and the prophesy sails inevitably toward the cold unforgiving floor ten feet from where we stand.

Well done there Longbottom, way to do the family proud. It's not like that little glass ball is at all important, not like there's a Dark Lord and twenty murderous terrorists going to any trouble to collect the thing. No no, you can buy three of them for a Knut down Knockturn Alley. Face it Longbottom, you're just no damn good.

"Harry, Fb sorry!" I say as he locks eyes with me. What I see in that gaze is unexpected.

Locked into the green eyed stare it's like time grinds to a crawl, I could see a hummingbird's wings or catch a snitch using two fingers. Across his eyes little black flecks begin swirling like a raging blizzard until they are unbroken jet black, and then from the opposite direction the same blizzard begins in jade. He blinks and a new look crosses his face as time and the chaos around us crashes back to normal.

"Hey, Neville mate..." he flashes a shit kickin' grin totally out of nowhere, and turning back toward the fray he finishes "...watch this"

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Well I'll be damned, it worked. Oh, and secondly that was one weird-ass sensation; much like being transfigured into a fine mist, and right as you are about to blow away in the breeze your body snaps back together. Not painful per-say, but definitely maxing out on the weirdness meter.

I take stock of myself and my surroundings, low end physical and magical exhaustion, a few bumps, bruises, and a deep little gash across my left cheek. I can feel more than a dozen magical cores actively fighting, and I have a very young, very nervous looking Neville Longbottom staring me in the face. Okey-dokey, Department of Mysteries Battle it is then.

Fantastic!

"Hey, Neville mate... watch this" I spin round and bring eleven inches of phoenix wand to bear on whoever is foolish enough to get in my way.

I run a practiced eye over the area, taking stock of the double handful of combatants, as well as note that Albus Dumbledore has taken the time to properly backlight himself against the doorframe, outlined in his most heroic pose. Enough of that foolishness, I've seen this memory enough times to know Padfoot is acting like a jackass and has about twenty seconds to live.

I spring forward and unleash a well drilled spell-chain designed for this specific situation. Barrages of spells splash themselves against the shields of both LeStrange and Black, knocking them both of balance. An invisible hook like a fishing line scoops Sirius away from the Veil and slams him into the far wall, as a number of far less friendly hexes direct themselves at the crazed Death Eater whose standing before me.

I don't even give her the opportunity to begin using her baby voice, nostalgic as that might be, as I snap off the remainder of my chain. Damn she's still on her feet, nice going girl. We trade spells for a while, slapping away some of the more telegraphed jinxes using specific shields until I've had enough and brush off one of from the old days.

"Confringo, Sectumsempra, Chiroptera, Abolesco, Oblivate, Lacero, Incarcerous"

It was nicknamed 'the crazy chain' because let's face it, who uses medical bone vanishing spells, schoolyard hexes, and high level dark arts in the same chain. It's just not done. Let alone the fact that there is a memory charm in there, you'd have to be mental to use something like that in a real fight; hence the name I suppose but screw it, I like the thing.

I give her some credit as Bellatrix still manages to free herself from the ropes, even if she is a little the worse for wear. I snap off a Lesser Prewett and she drops under the combine weight of so much offensive magic. I'm breathing hard by now but really, I'm Harry Potter, did you honestly think she stood a chance against me?

In shadow and out of most people's line of sight, the fall of Andi Tonks' sister went surprisingly unnoticed; she's still in one piece, albeit one big flat piece, covered in cuts, breaks, and bruises. Dora Tonks is being revived and tended to by a cantankerous Mad-Eye Moody, the girl is tiny, was she always so small?

The Order members who are still active are binding the fallen and tending the wounded under the Headmasters direction. We need to get to the Atrium, I have an old friend who is about to make an appearance.

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My head is ringing as my vision swims back into focus. Right where am I? I seem to be pinned under something, oh yeah okay, this is a statue from the Fountain of Magical Brethren, Albus must have animated it like he did last time, only now I was hit with a bit more force.

He is over there duelling with a Dark Lord and not giving me even the slightest opportunity to have his back.

Idiot!

I leverage myself up, being careful not to make any sudden movements else one or the other of those two will start paying attention to little old me, and I have just the spell for this situation. Something I came across a number of years back when I was doing research into how destructive a piece of magic I could throw at an opponent.

Left, right, swish to the middle, 90 degrees, turn horizontally, downwards slash, pause, turn, over and under, half twist clockwise, pull back, and, jab...

"Incendios Grata"

Technically this is an Incendios Grata with the McIntyre Wandmotion, or McIntyre Amplifier. It was crafted as an academic exercise and is generally useless in a fight because it adds fourteen seconds to the casting time. But in a situation like this, where the target is distracted, this magic is nothing short of gods-sent.

A column of red and gold fire bursts out of my Holly and Phoenix hot enough to flash boil steel, black soot and billowing smoke worming throughout the raging inferno, as magically conjured flames race toward their target.

Wow, this is tiring. I mean sure, I'm channelling about as much magic as half a dozen of those kids graduating the Auror Academy could manage, but I'm no ordinary Auror by any stretch.

Come on Potter hold it together, you're Harry fucking Potter, Badass, you can keep up with a little bit of magically created fire. And hey, if

you don't keep it up good ol' Voldemort over there is gonna kick your sixteen year old ass.

That would be embarrassing wouldn't it kid.

Sweat is starting to pool across my brow as the seconds tick by. Oh hell, this isn't good, my core is still severely limited by my Scar, keeping this up is probably not the best idea. Shut it Potter, just hang in there, what's a little super heated flame after all the shit you've gone through.

More seconds tick by, ten seconds, twenty, thirty seconds. The flames began to lessen as I cut short the spell, dropping back into defensive stance instinctively. Of course Voldemort is absolutely fine, bastard that he is, scorched and well aware 'the-only-one-he-ever-feared' is bearing down on him, but still fine.

He makes a strategic withdrawal, and this Battle is over.

I wobble gasping for breath, before falling to my knees. An almighty throbbing breaks through my scar as I flip onto my back. The pressure increases as the Horcrux inside me takes my magically weakened state as an opportunity to attempt possession.

This is so not part of the plan.

I take hold of myself; will myself back to the fore. And I push back, a little at first but enough. Harder and harder the pressure mounts and I barely hold it together. Then it breaks, like cresting a hill it's all downhill from here. A short while later it's all finished, a different kind of battle is won.

The fighting is over, for one more day at least.

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"...it is mainly about who can cheat the most in a dick measuring contest" – nonjon

June 18th 1996: Ministry of Magic, Level 8, Atrium  
21:20 Sidereal Time

Time to get to work I suppose. Just because you defeated a Dark Lady and then chased off a Dark Lord, and then fought for your very Soul in an odd battle of wills and possession, does not mean you get to slack off.

There is work to be done.

The Atrium has begun filling up with all those ever-so-helpful politicians, jobsworths, and other assorted timewasters. Minister Fudge is looking on top form, confused and bumbling, who would have guessed.

Some of the Auror office are starting to make it here, though none of them seem to be doing anything but mill about and get in the way. I spy Madam Bones finally, so taking stock of both the Headmaster and the Minister I get on with my work.

"Jenkins." I shout "Jenkins! Front and centre NOW"

Junior Auror Jenkins is at this point only about three months out the Academy, so hasn't had the chance to grow a full backbone yet. I like the guy though, and he's one of the only people in the room I recognise.

"Do you know who I am?" He nods "Spit it out man."

"You're Harry Potter."

"Excellent, do you know who that was Albus Dumbledore and I were fighting?"

"Yes, it was You-Know-Wh-"

"Voldemort, say his name for Merlin sake you're supposed to be an Auror" I cut him off again before he can respond "Now, do you know the way to the Department of Mysteries... it's on Level Nine if you need a hint"

"Yes" he immediately answers.

This is to the good. What I'm doing is a little Dark Lord trick I picked up somewhere along the way; if you get someone repeatedly agreeing, in this case saying 'Yes' over and over, they are far more

likely to just keep on agreeing with you without stopping to think about it.

I also keep interrupting him before he can reflect too much on my authority. I need to ensure he runs off to follow my orders before questioning the fact that I do not technically have the right to give orders.

"Good. Now go down to the Time Room, you know where that is?" nods "...and search through the wreckage for the most robust Time-Turner you can find. I'll be leaving here in precisely five minutes so it may be wise to run." I peer at him closely "What are you waiting for man? Hop!"

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As Jenkins runs off I get to the second most important thing I need to do here, provisionally depose the sitting Minister of Magic. I round on the group who are just standing there looking at me in confusion, taking a deep breath I lay out the spiel that I had written down beforehand which has the best chance of working.

"I Harry James Potter in my capacity as Head of an Ancient and Noble House temporarily strip you, Cornelius Oswald Fudge of your position as Minister of Magic on the grounds of gross incompetence and corruption leading to the resurrection of the Dark Lord Voldemort and his subsequent attack on the Ministry Building.

Madame Amelia Bones, Director of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, you are now raised acting Minister, I would advise you to take Mr. Fudge into custody until the Wizengamot meeting, which will be scheduled for 8 o'clock tomorrow morning."

I take another deep breath and let it out for a long moment, giving those in the Atrium a chance to digest some, but almost certainly not all, of what I just said.

There is quite a bit of spluttering from that bowler hat wearing sack of-, anyway, after I give him 'The Gaze' and point out that with the backing of not only the Director of the DMLE, but the newly exonerated Albus Dumbledore, I in fact do have the authority to strip him of his position.

Admittedly this is only temporarily, but given that Voldemort was here recently, and that I have already called an emergency session of the Wizengamot in the same breath as I fired him, those watching can be sure it sticks.

It also helps that Fudge's close personal relationship with Lucius Malfoy was brought up when the Death Eater was carted past by Kingsley. Neville is at his side and I wave him over, noting that Jenkins is making his way back to me.

I take in Madame Bones "Jenkins, good work man, we'll make an Auror out of you yet. Now take possession of a Healer and drag it to a young brunette girl on Level Nine, she has been hit with a Flame-Cutter Curse in Purple, and she is to be given Alpha-Prime priority, I need her on her feet and on Hogwarts grounds an hour before sunrise. That gives the Healer..."

"Tempus" 21:27

"...less than six hours. Once you've briefed them pair up with the rest of the Aurors and start dealing with those Death Eater prisoners."

Damn, so much to deal with. I can only hope I don't forget something important. Oh well, yippee-kai-yay, and no rest for the wicked. Madame Bones is starting to get a little peeved that I'm ignoring her, and I have too many other things I need to do.

"Okay, you have questions" a statement not a question, applicable to both the new Minister and the old Headmaster "Bring Aurors Shacklebolt, Tonks, and Moody, as well as Percy Weasley to Hogwarts Headmasters office in one hour. Spin back to... 22:32 after you have finished dealing with what has happened this evening. I would also appreciate if you sent out the call to the Wizengamot in my name as I am going to be too busy to do it myself..."

I can see there are going to be objections, and in a brilliant move I ignore all of them. Instead of addressing any of their questions I fire off my last little bombshell "...And if it's not too much trouble, bring me a LeStrange. I don't care which one but I would prefer whichever is the most capable of walking unaided."



I'm guessing the assumptive, hopefully commanding air I was going for worked at least a little. Given that I'd grabbed Neville and was through the floo before anyone could stop me. From the looks on their faces before I left, my orders will probably be followed.

I have so much to do tonight, and already I'm exhausted.

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"And you, Harry, are a miracle. It's easy to believe in you, if you allow it." – mira mirth

June 18th 1996: Hogwarts Headmasters Office  
21:44 Sidereal Time

Watching Harry I will admit that being confused is a state I am more familiar with than most. This whole day has been strange bordering on absurd. Weird to think that just a few hours ago I was flunking my History of Magic exam, I just don't understand why we have to remember the specific dates on which the almost identical Goblin Rebellions happened.

Ask me anything about wizard history and I'll be as able to answer as well as any; 'What group first enforced the Interdict of Merlin and for what reasons?' Questions like that, you know, ones that actually matter to our culture, but why Goblin Rebellions, I just don't get it.

I got sidetracked there for a moment. No, this being the same day on which I failed my History O.W.L. is what has me confused. A few hours ago, not long after the ill fated, pointless History exam, I found myself in a fight with those bastard Slytherins, while Harry and Hermione were apparently wrestling a Giant or maybe battling Centaurs or something, I really should ask about that at some point. So I landed my first spell in a real fight, an Impediment Jinx, against one of those faceless Slytherin guys, and less than an hour later I'm winging my way into a real honest to goodness battle, riding on the back of a Thestral.

I had overheard that comment about a rescue of wanted mass murderer Sirius Black, and the possibility of having to square off against the Dark Lord, but whatever. If Harry thought we were just going to let him do it alone, which I have no doubt he did, he had another thing coming.

So we break into the Ministry, I meet that cackling psychopath Bellatrix, a load of spellfire gets tossed around, and I manage to land a few curses on some Death Eaters. This was not how I thought today would go but then again things could have been far worse, I could still be sitting my History of Magic O.W.L. for instance.

This is where my confusion grows to levels never before experienced. We were on the ragged edge, everyone was down, I was wandless and injured, and Harry was all but falling over with exhaustion. Then I break that glass orb and it's like a switch is flipped. Harry suddenly starts tossing around the kind of magic I've never seen before in my life, rapid fire spells being let loose with ease, and at the end of it LeStrange is down in a bloody pile, hopefully dead.

Next time I see him he's staring down a room full of people, issuing orders with this commanding presence, and people are jumping to do as he says. That one Auror, what was his name, Johnson? Jenkins? Looked like Solstice had come early when Harry told him he'd done well. Even Susan's Aunt Amelia, a woman who I know quite well and am willing to admit intimidates me quite a lot, didn't really question the toppling of Fudge, or suddenly being in charge of the Ministry.

And now I'm in a room of Hogwarts I've never seen before, all these portraits looking at us, and so many silvery devices of indeterminate function making noises in one corner. Harry strode in, bonded a House Elf who was wearing like four hundred hats, and set about brewing a Potion on top of what I can only assume is Headmaster Dumbledore's oak desk, using ingredients the crazy elf presumably stole from Professor Snape.

"Brewing this is so far above my skill level, but it will be simmering for the next few minutes. Do you have any quick questions? I'll give you a full explanation later, but you look as if you're about to explode mate."

What do you say to that? "Urm.." when in doubt there is always thickly mumbling I guess.

"Bellatrix is alive I'm afraid." Harry takes a stab in the dark.

"Oh" damn, not one of the things I wanted to ask, but still damn. "It's like you're a different person Harry. And that look on your face when you were talking to Fudge" I sort of state as he smiles slightly and begins turning back towards his potion.

"That was 'The Unforgivable Gaze,' my signature wizarding effect. You know the type; Snape has his cloak billowing, Albus has his eye twinkling, Hermione has her hair with varying levels of bushiness depending on how much stress she is under. I have my intimidating glare that the younger Aurors started calling 'The Unforgivable Gaze' and the name kind of stuck, my eyes are green so I guess it fits." Okay, as if that didn't just open up even more questions.

He interrupts me as I'm about to say something to that affect "I've travelled pretty far back in time Neville, I'll tell you about it..." He looks up as people start entering the room. "...Urg, I'll have to tell you about it later."

Travelled back in time? What the hell. And from the looks of it, there is no way that Time-Turner has anything to do with it. What's really a pain is that I can't even ask anything else as he's fully focused on brewing again. Either that or he's intentionally ignoring the people filing one by one into the room.

Some time passes and Amelia Bones floos in followed by several others and an unconscious prisoner. Harry bottles up his potion, pockets several others the Elf had brought him, and walks across the room toward what turns out to be the Sorting Hat. Pulling out a ruby encrusted sword and strapping it to his back with a wave of his wand, he turns to the prisoner and hits him with a bolt of twisting red light.

The man crumples at the middle and is steadily transfigured into a hand-sized Death Eater plushie, complete with tiny silver mask. Grinning he picks up the stuffed toy and straps it to his belt, blatantly ignoring the looks of all those in the room.

"You ready to come on another Harry Potter adventure Neville?" I just kind of nod in a bemused sort of way, and then I have a Time-Turner around my neck, so we both vanish across the sands of time.

Have I mentioned I'm very confused?

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Sticking my Time-Turner back beneath my robes I stretch my back and let out a long sigh of relaxation. We're back to half-four in the afternoon, a few hours before the famous Ministry Battle. The Headmasters Office is empty and even the thrice damned Phoenix is missing.

I've had a busy couple of hours, and I have a long road yet to travel before I can get any real rest. Still, I can take a few moments in the afternoon sun. Moment over and I look over and find myself once again surprised at how young Neville looks.

"Shifting your weight from foot to foot. Not looking me in the eye. Lack of terrifying glare. Total failure of demanding I stop acting foolish and answer some friggin' questions. Were you always this unsure of yourself?" He was, I know, but I'll be fucked if I'm going to talk to him as though he's just a kid.

"Erm, I.. Ur" eloquent there kiddo.

"Neville. You have just gone toe to toe with some of the most dangerous human beings alive, you've followed me back in time for no other reason than I asked you too, and you're standing there shifting your weight like you don't have any gods damned right to some answers." I challenge. This is Neville, he is at his scariest when some asshole challenges him.

I see a flash of the real Neville when he registers my tone but it passes and he asks "Fine, what are we doing, are you going to tell me what you mean by having 'travelled pretty far back in time' and don't tell me we used a Time-Turner, you know that's not what I mean." A good start, I just hope he believes me.

We close on the seventh floor, opposite a familiar tapestry of ballet dancing trolls, our first port of call opens to the Room-of-Hidden-Things and we enter.

"Yeah, for reasons we're not going to get into until we get back to the Headmasters Office in six hours, I've travelled, or more accurately sent my memories and consciousness back in time to today, June 18th 1996. The first day of Voldemort's second war,

when 'the Ministry Six' as the histories call us, infiltrated the Department of Mysteries and destroyed the prophecy."

Hmm, I think maybe I need to go to Borgin and Burkes to buy the other half of this Vanishing Cabinet, those things are expensive and as he doesn't know where this half is, I might get it cheap. As I clip the Diadem of Ravenclaw to my belt I decide that perhaps scamming Mr. Borgin can wait until this war is over.

"So why today, why come back today?" Neville shakes me out of my irrelevant thoughts.

"It has to do with the method of travel, I'll get to that when we are with the others. My other choice was May 2nd 1998, the day I defeated Voldemort. But you know me well enough that I wouldn't do anything this stupid and dangerous without making it more stupid and dangerous by trying to save everybody's lives." He just nods at that. What was it Hermione called it? My 'saving people thing' I guess I was notorious for it even this far back.

"If you defeated You-Know-Who why come back in time?" Neville asks as we walk toward the statue of the one eyed witch that acts as guardian to the passageway out of Hogwarts. "No, don't answer. You said you'd get to that when we meet up with the others later tonight." I smile, Neville always was sharper than people gave him credit for. Instead he asks "What are we doing today then, you obviously didn't steal a Time-Turner and kidnap me for no reason."

Kidnap? "We have some shopping to do, a little theft, and we have a healer to visit. But mostly, the two of us are here to destroy fifty-seven percent of the Dark Lord's Soul." Other than pursed lips and a slight frown, he just takes this news as everyday.

Neville rocks by the way, I'm not sure you noticed.

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"...because shopping is every bit as dangerous as banking" – JBern

June 18th 1996: Leaky Cauldron, Hannah Abbot's Room  
17:05 Off-Sidereal Time

Transfiguring the Death Eater plushie back into what turns out to be Rabastan LeStrange I note that he is still blessedly unconscious. I hit him with a monster Confundus Charm so he thinks he is incredibly thirsty and that the potion I brewed in Hogwarts Headmasters Office is the only thing in the world he can safely drink.

A quick "Rennervate," a downed potion, and a whispered "Imperio" later and I send the man out of the room. My use of 'life sentence in Azkaban' magic garners a questioning look from my companion so I explain.

"Do you know why they are called Unforgivable mate?" I ask rhetorically "There are a few reasons really, for one you can't cast them accidentally. Meaning that if you hit someone with a properly cast 'Avada Kedavra' then you really meant for them to die, as appose to hitting someone in the neck with a cutter and having them die. The person is still dead but the circumstances with the Killing Curse leave much less room for manoeuvring. That is not to say the magic itself is inherently evil.

Now, I am in fact completely rubbish at casting Unforgivables. They send Senior Aurors 'to the farm' as it's called in order to learn the Killing Curse. I've spent considerable time there shooting green light at the animals and all I got for my effort was frustration and a bunch of cows glaring at me in annoyance. No, as useful as the spell is, for whatever reason I cannot cast it at all.

I've cast the Cruciatus twice in real battle; Bellatrix laughed at me, and Amycus Carrow was only out of action for about sixty seconds. One minute tops before he recovered, and that is with the lesson crazy bitch gave me on the subject. Lastly there is the Imperius which I can cast, but only so long as it's on someone with average willpower and only if they stay within about twenty feet."

We head into Diagon Alley as we have some shopping to do. "What I gave to good old Rabastan was called the 'Anima Shatter' Potion, a real nasty piece of work which temporarily crushes the will and scatters the mind of even a Master Occlumens. Among other things this makes it far easier to land the Imperius Curse on a person with a strong, well-defended mind. There is something of vital importance to defeating Voldemort in the LeStrange Vault, so I used the Potion and Curse then command him to go get it."

Neville seems more or less mollified and asks me a few more questions eventually touching on Occlumency. I spend most of the shopping trip making inquiries about the past. Merely double checking that I have in fact travelled back in time rather than having entered some kind of crazy alternate universe.

We are in the past as far as I can tell, which is kind of disappointing if far from unexpected.

I pick up the Potter Family Ring from Gringotts then head back to the Cauldron, and the younger LeStrange. Taking the magically expanded trunk filled with all the gold and valuables stolen from his Vault, I have Rabastan remove the Trace on Neville's new Oak and Dragon wand, then hit him with an excessive 'Everbero' stunner and vanish his pelvis.

I then plant on him a timed portkey, so he will find himself in a MLE holding cell a few moments after we went off sidereal time. I admit it, I only really needed the Hufflepuff Cup, but I think all that money would be better served in my hands than in Cissy Malfoy's pockets.

Just think, I'm halfway toward becoming the next Robin Hood.

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We approach the Gaunt Shack not far outside Little Hangleton at 18:39 and Neville asks me the question which has probably been bugging him for a while now.

"Why me?"

It took longer than it should to get the Solution, and order those contact lenses without answering too many questions. Even when Confounding the Normals and paying an extortionate amount, it will still take a couple of days before they are ready. Neville has been quiet for a while and we're walking down a dirt path toward the Ring Horcrux.

"What do you mean?" I can be pretty sure I know exactly what he means but it's best to be sure.

"Why bring me with you on this hunt, or whatever it is we're doing, why me and not say Ron?" He's carrying a pair of bolt cutters over

his shoulder and I can tell from his look that he really wants to know the answer to his question.

"Ron used to be a close friend I suppose, but well, you can't really spend thirty years sleeping with a man's wife and still have any respect for him." I catch the look in his face "Don't bloody well look at me like that, Urg, fine okay I'll tell you a little story about my life, that is if you are actually interested?"

We come upon the Noble House of Gaunt in all its Shacky glory and I get on with what I'm about. While the curse on that damn ring is dangerous, there are probably a cart load of other protections I will have to Mad-Eye my way through.

"After Sirius died in the Department of Mysteries Battle I took a few hits and got a bit depressed. It took me a few weeks but I eventually came to the conclusion that it would be best for me to simply ignore the war. I would focus on Quidditch, hack off most of my schoolwork, and generally leave the real problems to the adults.

I also decided that the thing I needed most was a girlfriend.

So that's what I did, I got this big stupid obsession about 'claiming' Ginny Weasley, and when I was around her and my friends I just let everything slide. Don't get me wrong, I spent most of that year trailing Draco Malfoy and working through the history of Tom Riddle with Dumbledore. And at the end of the year Dumbledore died and I was rather violently thrown back to reality.

We, that is Hermione and I, go on a yearlong scavenger hunt for pieces of Voldemort's Soul. The same hunt that you and I are on right now, only there is no cat smelling tent nor is there a Weasley bitching and moaning at us. After a brief stay under the hospitality offered by Malfoy Manner, where there is some torture and I lose a close friend, we find ourselves in Shell Cottage.

Tensions were high and for reasons I'm not really going to get into involving frustration in his lack of... physical aptitude, I accidentally sleep with Bill's new wife, and one thing led to another when Hermione burst in trying to stop us.

The three of us felt super guilty and sort of decided never to mention it ever again. I defeated Voldemort a few months later, and because



of guilt, and the debt we felt was owed the Weasley family, both Hermione and I ended up agreeing to marry Ron and Ginny respectively."

Having never spoken these things out loud in this way, I'm quite surprised at how cathartic it is to just throw it all out there. I finish stripping the Ring of the withering curse and release the sticking charm keeping Neville on the wall, well out of danger of the compulsion trying to force both of us to do something stupid.

Something stupid along the lines of putting the ring on our fingers without checking for withering curses. Bad things would come from those kinds of actions, of that I can be sure.

Briefly slipping the newly cleared Ring on my finger, and then feeling ever so glad we didn't need those bolt cutters, I do a Snatch-And-Side-Along, cracking us to our next location.

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"This is where I was meant to live. I was supposed to stay here if anything had happened to them" – Lordddwar

June 18th 1996: St. Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries, Reception  
19:09 Off-Sidereal Time

I find myself having a hard time getting a read on this new Harry. He claims to have travelled back in time an unspecified length of time, which I guess he probably has given the magic he was hurling around in the Department of Mysteries, and the suspicious level of knowledge he is using on this hunt for mysterious objects.

I tried to figure out why he would bring me with him on his quest to 'destroy half of the Dark Lord's Soul' but when I asked him, he gives me this unhelpful story about how he won the war the first time around.

Harry has just finished talking to the welcome witch about a mind healer and we have been told to go into the waiting area until one is free.

"So I'm only with you because everyone else is injured and you don't respect Ron. And you don't respect him because you've been sleeping with his wife, risking an Honour Duel with Ron at best, and Blood Feud with the Weasley Clan at worst. I'm what, a backup side-kick?"

He takes a moment to throw up a Dome of Silence as he barks a short laugh "Ha! You're far from a side-kick as is possible to be Neville. I've been telling people for years; while I killed Voldemort, it was Neville Longbottom who won the war."

Now that is just downright ludicrous. How in the name of Merlin could I have won a war? No worse than that, if what he said is true this war ended in less than two years from now.

"From your expression would I be right in my deduction that you do not believe me?" I just kind of nod disbelievingly.

"It's true you know. That Prophecy we destroyed, erm tonight I suppose, named me 'the Dark Lord's Equal' but it could have applied to either of the boys born at the end of July in 1980. So when I ask who you think the two most magically powerful people in the world are, what do you say?"

I think Albus Dumbledore first of course, but Harry asked me for two and I'll take a stab at where he is going. "I'd guess He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named and You probably."

"Close but you're way off. You and I are the two strongest, not Beardface, not Snakelips, You and Me."

Right well now we know he's just fucking with you Longbottom. When did you first perform accidental magic, at age eight. How many times have you been called a Squib, countless. You're flat last in the year for every subject save Herbology and now a guy who you once looked up to as a friend it standing there being a complete arsehole. I'm out of here.

I turn to leave.

"You have been using your father's wand for the last five years, it never chose you, and you never won its allegiance. From what I understand of wandlore it was such a terrible match that you'd have

been about as successful channelling your magic through a stick of fucking celery.

More than that though, the night Frank and Alice were injured a young Neville Longbottom was given a brute force Obliviation to stop him crying. It was done by a Junior Obliviator, a man who would eventually call himself Gilderoy Lockhart and whose own backfiring spell would eventually land him in the same ward as your parents. He caused quite a lot of damage to your short term memory, and made it difficult for you to remember the lessons at school.

Combine that injury with the wand you were using, and the only way you managed to get through your exams at all is by brutally overpowering every single spell you've ever cast. We're here now to find a Healer who can fix the damage, although I should warn you... with the memory block removed you will remember what happened on the 5th of November 1981."

I don't respond. I'm not sure I could say anything even if I had something to say.

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It does not take all that long for a man called Healer Stanhope to get to us, we have a little bit of time so I'm not too worried about the wait. Neville and I stood quietly as I wanted to give him a chance to absorb some of what I just told him. That, and give him the opportunity to brace himself for uncovering his principle Dementor memory.

"Tempus" 19:40

Neville is led off and it occurs to me how often I find myself using the 'what-time-is-it' spell. This is the first Operation I have been on in years without my Tactical Display keeping time and the mission clock in order. I notice with annoyance how reliant I've become on the technology.

What was the phrase again, 'machines break, eyes don't' or something along those lines. Whatever, the important meaning of the saying is; when stealing ideas from the Normals it makes good sense to follow the advice when it comes to drawbacks. In this case, overreliance on technology is going to get you killed.

My first self should be winging his way to London on the back of a Thestral soon enough. We're going to have to wait a little until my home is empty of Order members. No, not my home, damn I didn't think about that. With Padfoot alive again it is his home. Hmm, plainly I will have to convince him to sell it to me. There is no way in hell I'm living in Potter Place without good reason I can tell you that.

Yes that's right ladies and gentlemen. Harry James Potter, the boy who spent ten years of what passes for childhood living in a cupboard under the stairs, being beaten, neglected, and suffering from long term malnutrition, owns Potter Place, rather than the Dumbledore Cottage in Godric's Hollow. Not only do I own a home, but the traditional seat of Lord Potter is possibly the Mansion-iest Manor House in Great Britain, easily the equal to Draco's Ancestral Home.

And furthermore I cannot stand the place.

Can't stand the look of it, the smell, the stupid fountain roundabout out front of the colossal entry hall. Growing up in that huge pretentious monstrosity goes a long way to explaining the spoiled brat mentally my father James Potter was so famous for in his early years. If it were not for the kickass library I doubt I'd ever bother visiting Al.

As I reaffirm my decision to do whatever it takes in order to acquire the seat of the House of Black, Neville returns to the waiting area with a slightly dazed look on his face. I thank Healer Stanhope and lead him out on unsteady legs toward an Apparition point.

Two more stops and it's back to Hogwarts.

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"...he's got a Longbottom after him this time, of course he's worried"  
– Clell

June 18th 1996: Grimmauld Place, Street  
20:16 Off-Sidereal Time

Standing outside Number Twelve we have a little bit of a problem. Well not so much a problem, as something which will take a degree

of finesse. Neville does not know the Secret and so cannot see the building. I can do something called 'ghosting,' physically bringing him through the Fidelius without him having to know the secret, much like how Poppy can be brought through to the old Headquarters for Healing without ever knowing the Secret.

This is in fact one of the main reasons I believe prove Snape actually did hate Voldemort, and wasn't just pulling everyone's chain. Had Snape been fucking with us he could have ghosted a whole swarm of Death Eaters through the Fidelius and simply assaulted Grimmauld Place.

Whatever, that is off topic. I could do that with Neville, however if we stroll through the front door in full view of any Order members we will more than likely be forced to answer some rather pointed questions.

Making use of my Cloak of Invisibility we shuffle homoerotically close. I am more than a little uncomfortable with this turn of events, though we do vanish from sight and make it through the front door without detection, barely without detection given what greets us in the entryway.

The scene is bedlam. Harry Potter and his friends have dropped off the face of the earth. They are not at the Ministry, and they are certainly not at Hogwarts. The Order of the Phoenix are gearing up for a battle, doing all those last minute preparations and age old little ceremonies soldiers have been doing since the beginning of time.

We move to a shadowed corner and Circe save me but I'm glad Mad-Eye isn't here to see through the Cloak. Neville is still quite out of it. Understandable given the harrowing memory he is in the process of reintegrating.

A long time passes; Dora Tonks causes a huge scene during her inevitable reunion with the umbrella stand, the rest of the Order get themselves in fighting shape, and the last occupant of my home vacates the building. I double check with a 'Homenum Revelio' and we're clear.

After a long conversation with Kreacher he is convinced to get me the Slytherin Locket, my luck is still with me as I was concerned

Dung Fletcher had stolen it before Sirius died rather than after, when the man was swiping everything not nailed down.

As we wait once more I offer Neville an Invigoration Draught and I see from his whole aspect that he is focusing on his newly uncovered thoughts. The Cruciatus Curse does not cause insanity, it causes pain, and if held for too long, death. Used intermittently over fourteen hours however, while the target is praying its attackers don't check a cupboard they recently hid their son, and well... Neville could use a distraction.

"Life after this war was pretty bloody fantastic you know. Interested in hearing about what we've got to look forward to?"

"Did I go for my Mastery in Herbology?" Neville bursts in as though grasping at a lifeline.

"Yep, one of the world's most respected authorities on the subject. I was actually surprised at what Herbology involves in the real world. I used to think it was all gardening, standing around in a greenhouse up to your elbows in dragon dung." I get an acknowledging look, for some reason everyone seems to think that.

"That's one of the main reasons I want to go for it, do some travel you know. Being quite good at the subject helps too."

Professor Sprout really should tell her students about what Herbology really involves. She would get far more people interested in taking the N.E.W.T. if they found out Curse Breakers do less travelling than Field Herbologists. It comes from the fact that all the most interesting plants are in far flung corners of the earth.

Much loved tourist destinations like Cambodia, Nicaragua, and West Africa, are all in a day's work.

Neville speaks ten or eleven languages, negotiating his way across borders means he's had to develop skills dealing with corrupt governments and idiotic politicians. His crew gets attacked by local Dark Wizards, which apparently happens on a disturbingly regular basis, so he is forced to keep his duelling skills nice and sharp.

There is more, all of the supporting skills people running expeditions develop, Neville already has, making him not just one of the most

respected people in his field, but probably one of the most badass individual alive.

"In a couple of years you'll be in the deepest darkest jungle, back doing your research where you belong."

We're quiet for a while before he asks "What did you mean about You and I being the most magically powerful. I can feel how much better this wand is, but I just don't see myself ever going toe to toe with a Dark Lord the way you do."

I think for a little while and come up with a story he might benefit from hearing "Things were pretty sweet after Voldemort was defeated, for decades the only real Dark Uprising happened in 2008 when the Dark Lady Xi-Feng and her followers were threatening the Chinese Olympic Games.

You and I had met up in a bar somewhere when we both happened to be in the same country, I don't remember which country but it really doesn't matter, this was one of the few times I got significantly drunk. Anyway, this total prick working for the International Federation of Warlocks spots us and offers to buy us a few drinks. Excellent we think, yay we made a new friend. So we wake up the next morning-ish and low and behold, what do I find.

A magically binding contract, signed in blood with the names Harry Potter and Neville Longbottom.

You eventually did track the guy down and cause him... harm, but that didn't change the fact we were now contracted to take a Portkey to China and dispatch the local Dark Lady. It was laughable really, as soon as word got out that the two of us were in the country her entire base of support vanished overnight, and she was left with nothing save her fortress and a double handful of marked followers.

As soon as we found her base we just tore down the wards and strolled in the front door wands-a-blazing. The entire uprising lasted four days once we got there, and I swear I spent more time listening to Hannah yelling at me than I did fighting. As if it was somehow my fault we had to go to China."

I always liked that story, fun times.

Taking a book and the Slytherin Locket, we thank Kreacher as we head out the door.

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Stepping off the boat onto the shores of sunny Azkaban, it is 20:51. This is my first choice when it comes to destroying the Soul Fragments infesting these objects, because if it works the magic inherent to the items will remain intact. I tested this method a dozen years ago when I found a Horcrux belonging to a Dark Wizard named Darius, and was interested in whether my theory held true.

It worked at the time, only Darius was nowhere near the wizard Voldemort is. I would regret having to use a Basilisk fang from the Chamber of Secrets, an Annihilation Potion, or worse of all Fiendfyre.

With a prayer it won't come to that, we walk toward the security checkpoint. I Prongs Away and advise Neville to do the same.

The bureaucrat we are lead to by one of the guards has a disdainful air about him, and his pettiness is pissing me off no end. I patiently count off reasons why I should not strangle him. Eventually we convince him this is not some half-arsed rescue attempt for one of his precious little prisoners, and we are taken to one of the Dementors.

During our walk down to the depths of the trefoil castle I get an idea. It probably won't work but it's worth a shot. "While we're here do you want the 20 minute wandless magic super seminar?"

"Wandless magic? I thought only really powerful people could do that, and it's supposed to take years of study."

"Yeah well, I came up with a quick and dirty method for teaching people the... 'knack' I suppose is a good word, the knack to wandless magic quickly. It's not particularly pleasant but I can teach you it in a few minutes rather than the normal months or years." If it works I add silently, as it almost always fails.

It doesn't take him long before he says "Sure, why the hell not" although I am beginning to doubt whether or not he factored in our location before agreeing to my instruction.



"Well first I'll have to teach you the Scary-Aura. Pick a spell, any powerful spell you know and draw in all the power you can, but do not actually cast it." Prongs is covering us so Neville lets his Patronus dissolve and does as I say. "Now build up magic for the spell as far as you can, remember not to actually cast the thing though." His wand tip is pooling a brutal looking red, and sweat is beginning to bead his forehead. "Just when you think you can't hold it in anymore -"

A loud echoing boom reverberates through the hallway as his viciously overpowered blasting curse slams into the floor.

As my laughter subsides I choke out "Good try" Before his glare doubles me over in fits again.

Eventually I get myself under control "When you get to the busting point next time, put away your wand and sort of flare the unfocused magic backwards, just unleash the raw force instead of directing it into a spell." Unfortunately there are no more hilarious explosions, so after a few attempts he does manage to generate a Visible Aura. It's brief, uncontrolled, and a bit wonky, well it does take practice and so I'm proud of him.

"Congratulations, you can now prove you are in the top one percent of spell casters in terms of raw power." It takes a little more explanation about how so few people can do, or bother to learn how to generate a Visible Aura. The skill is more a party trick than anything, useful only for scaring off the unwashed masses.

We reach our Dementor and instead of doing what we originally came here for I get on with the lesson. "Right, now back to wandless magic. Wandless is completely different from wanded, you don't cast any spells, and you can't get anywhere near the control or efficiency you would be able to with a wand. You instead use your raw magical power to force the universe to do as you desire. Will something to happen and then build up your power and make it happen.

Think of any Accidental Magic you performed as a kid and you will realise it wasn't actually accidental. You really wanted to do whatever it was you did, because you can't accidentally do magic any more than you can accidentally get a woman pregnant. You did it on purpose."

Neville tells me a story I vaguely remember about his uncle throwing him out a window, and I see he at least grasps some of what I'm saying."Now as I said, doing this takes a special Knack which takes most people a long, long time to get right. But we have here a Dementor, and you know how to perform a Patronus. So I'm going to put you in a room with one and you're going to Will the Patronus Mist to form without your wand, in a way analogous to producing a Scary-Aura."

He clearly doesn't like this idea, and to be fair neither did I when I was desperate to get over my irrational belief that it should be the same as with a wand, and so came up with the method. This is how I learned, and the two of us have equally terrible Dementor memories. If anything can convince a person to force the universe to bend to your will, it's the effect of a Dementor making you relive your most horrible moment.

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Were both a little shaken after the wandless session, and as I move onto focusing on the reason we are here originally, I become concerned that I've forgotten something important. Mentally I do a quick rundown of recent events:

Successfully complete time jump; check.

Save the life of Sirius Black; check.

Chase off Voldemort, sack Fudge, steal Time-Turner; check, check, check.

Pick up Lost Diadem of Ravenclaw in the Room-of-Hidden-Things; check.

Deal with Ring, Heal Neville, acquire Locket. Oh the cup, and swipe Cup; check, check, check... and check.

Seems as though everything is under control, or is at least going to plan. Merlin do I wish I could use my Command Inventory, it would make keeping track of events so much easier. No; remember what we talked about, no more overreliance on technology!

So next order of business; deal with Horcruxes,

The plan is quite simple, there is a fragment of Soul in each of these four objects, and Dementors eat Souls. So the theory goes; having a Dementor Kiss the Horcrux should destroy the Soul, all the while leaving the objects whole and undamaged.

These are powerful magically enchanted objects whose loss would be a great shame, bordering on a crime. Though I will say I'm more than a little sceptical on its odds of success, given that they are running at less than ten percent.

It works? Bloody hell!

Now I owe Astoria five Galleons.

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"He had only gotten significantly drunk a few times in his life..." – cloneserpents

June 18th 1996: Azkaban Island  
21:59 Off-Sidereal Time

As we head out passed the Anti-Apparition Net I look down at the shiny Rings on both index fingers, strange to think I could now style myself Heir of Slytherin and Heir of Griffindor. Should I so desire.

Tom Riddle was a direct descendant of Salazar Slytherin, as illegitimate son of Merope Gaunt of the Gaunt line. Coupled with the ability to speak Parsel he was close enough to fool the Head of House Ring into thinking he was worthy of the honour. Given my Scar Horcrux connection, the fact that Tom Riddle died in 1981, and my blood connection through the Peverells, and I am standing here having successfully tricked the Ring into thinking I am something like Tom's son.

Enchanted objects such as these have some measure of what could be described as intelligence, but they can be tricked. Testament to this fact is the shiny Ring on my left index finger. Note the lack of pain filled screaming.

I Side-Along Neville through the wards of Hogwarts. The Founder's Ring allowing me to fly directly in the face of the one truth I

remember from Hermione's lectures on Hogwarts a History, namely; one cannot Apparate under the castle wards. We can all be very glad the school kid version of Voldemort never worked out that little trick, his attacks on Hogwarts would have been embarrassingly effective had he known a method to easily get people through the wards.

I discovered the Ring allows me to do this when I was chasing after Lily's pratish boyfriend during the time she attended this castle. I also have a Founder's Ring you see, it's sitting quite comfortably here on my right index finger.

When researching my family history I learned that my surname comes from a knight who served King Henry II, Lord Barren Sir William Potter. Who was made a Lord thanks to some trouble the monarch was having with a turbulent priest. He married Helga Griffindor, a direct descendant of Godric, and Sir William took her crest as his own, most likely to add a sense of history to his name.

Rooting around in a Dungeon cupboard I finally come across the Prince's copy of Advanced Potion Making, which I pocket as one Severus Snape enters the room, offering us his trademark cloak billowing and on his face the famous 'I need to get laid' scowl. I had noticed the alarm ward go off, and had been hoping he would get here before our return to sidereal time.

"Ah, Potter so you are back from the obvious trap. Let me guess, you got your illustrious Godfather killed by your own stupidity and arrogance." Whoa, you got to admit the tosspot can hit it pretty close to the mark. Still, I've promised not to kill him. I make a snap decision to change the plan.

"You owe the Potter Family a Life Debt, how about you do me three small favours and we call it quits. You can go back to sucking the dick of the snakier of your two masters, disappear into obscurity, or work as a Polly down Knockturn Alley for all I care... Three little favours and you can be free to waste your life hating James Potter for the rest of your days."

There were a number of insults in there, but I'm offering him something he desperately wants. A way out of his mortifying Life Debt.

I see him visibly bite back his habitual response and actually think for a change. I also roll my eyes at his attempt to use Legilimency; thanks to the bizarre method I used to learn the art his probe just passes through, my thoughts seeming indistinct like mist. I would not recommend learning it my way however, it involves having a former Death Eater digging jagged furrows through your brain using a rusty screwdriver, a Dark Lord mind prying you for years on end, and finally a close friend dying in your arms.

Better go for the standard teaching methods.

Following an eternity of uncomfortable silence he grinds out "What. Three... Requests. Do. You. Have. In. Mind." Whoa, he really isn't a happy bunny is he? I moderate my taunting a little.

"Deal with Ginny Weasley for me. You're better at subtle Legilimency than I am..." Understatement, I need to use the incantation and it is far from subtle "...I would like you to implant commands making the ideas of sex on a first date unconscionable and disgusting for her to even think about. Subtle commands; you must do your very best and give me an oath not to change anything else out of spite.

Secondly you are to give her the idea of taking her Potions Mastery once she finishes school. I don't care how you do it, you can have one of your colleagues give her the suggestion for you if you choose.

Lastly you are to organise and pay for her transfer to Salem Witches' Institute, as well as pay full tuition until she graduates. Don't give me any shit about not having the gold, your friend at Room Thirty Four subsidises your income quite nicely so I hear."

He gives me an unreadable look for that last comment. I just cock an eyebrow and meet his eyes.

When the first of my children was born looking exactly like me, I came to the conclusion that he must be cursed. It was another of those of the few times I got significantly drunk, and for some unholy reason decided to name the boy after all the most wretched people in my life. This prick ranks second;

'Albus Severus Tom Vernon Potter'

I woke up with it written in blood on his birth certificate. Luckily I managed to break into the Hall of Records and swap it out for a fake, and then tell the kid he was named for the two bravest Headmasters I'd ever known. I'm ever so glad he never twigged on that the only other head of school I know is Min.

I really shouldn't drink.

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We're on a slow stroll back to the Headmasters Office and I'm glad things worked as well as they did. He sneered at The Gaze, and someone may have broken his nose, but in the end Mr. Snape agreed to my proposition.

"You're deporting Ginny to America?" Neville seems bemused more than anything, though it may have something to do with my casually insulting treatment of his most hated professor.

"The woman repulses me. You know she is single handedly responsible for keeping up moral during Seventh Year when the Carrows were running the school. Yet despite vast amounts of experience she has to be the worst lay in the entire world." The memory of it has me cringe unconsciously.

"Worse though; the woman is decent on a broom, good with a wand, and better with a cauldron. Meaning had she gone to any effort getting her own life rather than ruining mine, she could have theoretically become a real person."

"She can't be that bad if you married her."

"That bad, bah. She's worse! No. This way, this way she has the chance to get out on her own and possibly do something with her life. Also, I don't have to drown her." That last may have been said a touch wistfully.

"Fine, different question. What is Room Thirty Four?"

"Heh, Room Thirty Four is the business solely responsible for forty percent of Britain's Boomslang Skin demand, and Professor Snape has been selling student hair to his contact since he started working at Hogwarts."

It takes a moment for him to figure out what I'm talking about, but the look on his face when he does is priceless.

It is ten thirty and zero seconds precisely. Almost time to rejoin the rest of the world.

"The war was over. Too bad there was no one left to celebrate." – S'TarKan

December 3rd 2029: Ruins of Manhattan Island, Former United States of America

Mission Clock 71:08, 14:14 Sidereal Time

There is an almighty crash sending splintered concrete and shrapnel of varying sizes hurtling toward me as I take cover behind a burned out, spell reinforced husk of Land Rover Discovery. A dozen or so Night Stalkers have me pinned down, and my Hazard Assessment is warning of a high likelihood reserve force coming up from the rear.

Master Auror Ben Jenkins and his team are beneath a high density Apparition Net and are in desperate need of my assistance, but I can't link up with him while these idiots are still making trouble on the west side of the Island.

"Red Team! Jenkins you scar faced bastard, keep your shit together, I'll be with you in five." I send off as my sentiment is punctuated by another clattering explosion. His acknowledgment light winks on as I draw the Yew wand with my left hand, time for these jokers to taste double phoenix.

Dual Wand Duelling is an obscure branch of magic developed as an advanced form of offhand casting. As nobody is able to cast two different spells at once without risking a severe psychological break, the trick is to cast the separate spells a fraction of a second apart. Running two staggered spell-chains at the same time gives the Dual Wand Duellist a tremendous increase in massed firing, at the expense of a rather incredible drain to his or her magical core.

I find I cannot do this and focus on what spells I am using, so I simply use excising chains without doing anything creative on the fly, relying heavily on an overwhelming rate of fire to make up for an unfortunate level of predictability. When training I once clocked out at a frightening 94 spells per minute.

Holly and Yew a blur in my hands, every jinx hex and curse I can imagine careen toward my entrenched opponents. Gobbets of flesh, splashes of blood, the loud snaps of bones breaking, and to my ears sweetest of all, the screams of wounded.



Six minutes of continuous mass casting later and the field is mine. I ping the cores of those reinforcements I was warned of earlier, and upload their position to my display, as Fawkes sweeps down and flames me through the Apparition Net to the Nav Marker, Jenkins, and Red Team.

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I freelance my way through the last of my adversaries, conjured bullets whizzing past harmlessly on either side, I'm forced to sidestep Unforgivable Green and palm away a coalescing mass of silvery energy. It's all but over. Sticking with both wands I send another massive barrage of shocks, light flashes, and thunderous booms, eventually taking down the final man.

I sweep eyes over what's left of his team. Eight are still active, maybe. Four badly wounded, and only Jenkins himself seems up for another fight.

"We lost the Greens, no-one knows what happened" he reports without preamble.

Of course I am already aware of this, but something in his tone says there is more to it. "What do you mean no-one knows?" He can't be saying...

"I saw his body, what was remaining of his body at any rate. Wasn't much left above the waist." My mind rebels at what I think he's telling me "Thirty of those bastards were in puddles, Merlin only knows how many it took to take him down."

This can't be.

These wars are giving us enough trouble with the two of us. How am I supposed to win this thing alone. Yes, that's the ticket. Better to focus on the selfish, better to focus on what I've lost. Better that than on what I'm going to have to tell his girls.

Neville you bastard, what the hell.

"..." I say.

"Harry it-, it gets worse."

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With a pale sun high in the sky, the bitter chill of early winter is cut, making the day unusually warm. Halcyon days I believe they are called. Far too nice, far too pleasant. Her hair is fanned out glinting gold in the warm light of day. An image of perfection, pure and simple.

"You are going to be fine my love."

The rusted steel reinforcement bar sticking through her stomach proves this to be a lie, and yet she answers in typical Fleur "Oui, an' I am tired so I will sleep. 'Zen I shall awake in Shell Collage, an' I shall be in 'ze arms of Mon'Amour and Mi'Own."

"That you will Mademoiselle Delacour" I brush her hair out of her face and whisper in her ear "I love, and always will love you, my goddess."

"...'Arry"

I kiss her, she tastes of fresh rainfall, she tastes of Fleur, my heart, and my life.

The kiss is perfect.

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Albus Percival Wulfic Brian Dumbledore was little over a month away from his 115th birthday. In that time he would like to think he had achieved a measure of wisdom, which he could draw on to help guide the actions of himself and others.

He was also a rather astute observer of human behaviour, and as such noticed more than most the change in young Harry. Oh but everyone saw the boy commanding terribly powerful magics, and they all saw him stare down and depose a sitting political figure, but Albus noticed more than the others who found themselves present for these most unusual events.

The boy stood tall and commanding, and with an air about him which only the awfully perceptive could point out rested on the shoulders of one not hoping, but expecting to be obeyed.

He was looking on at the lad bottling his potion visibly ignoring the room's inhabitants, humming quietly to himself and thinking how this year's school club, amusingly named Dumbledore's Army, has been more a boon than he ever could have dreamed.

Powerful magics aside, this new attitude will only put him in good stead for his upcoming trials.

His hand imperceptibly twitches toward the Elder Wand as Harry and the Longbottom boy prepare to vanish using the Time-Turner he acquired. Preventing himself from acting in front of so many possible allies, Albus allows the two some freedom, calculating that they are quite likely to return presently.

Why else would one call a meeting with so many distinguished guests, unless to meet with them. Indeed he finds himself quite looking forward what young Harry has to say to all of these good people.

As the two fade out the door to his beloved office slams open, revealing a robed figure wreathed in power, with dreadfully familiar items clasped to his belts. A Cup, and a Locket, and, could that be, it is, the Lost Diadem of Ravenclaw.

For a moment he is at a loss, how could he possibly...

"Hey kids, miss me?"

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"What does it look like from your end of time" – S'TarKan

June 18th 1996: Hogwarts Headmasters Office  
22:32 Sidereal Time

I have to banish a bad memory, a very bad memory, but I manage with practiced ease as I down an Invigoration Draught. It will not do to fall asleep just yet, six more hours 'till sunrise grainy eyes or no.

My Aura is flaring unknowingly in light of my disquieting thoughts, as I stride back into the Headmasters Office, right as my earlier self departs.

With a single glance of assessment I take stock of my audience; Aurors Moody, Shacklebolt, and Tonks all standing patiently as if at an everyday briefing. Several random Order members shifting their collective weight, Twinkles, and Min. Damn she looks good, nice curves, I don't ever remember her being this young though. Hmm, I think I have a backup for the ritual if it becomes necessary.

That thought in mind I give a jaunty "Hey kids, miss me?"

"What the hell do you mean by making me Minister of Magic!" Amelia Bones bellows at me in a tone I'm far more familiar hearing from Sue.

"What do you mean, what do I mean? Should I not be congratulating you on your recent promotion?" From the look on her face I'm guessing No.

"I don't want to be Minister of Magic, I'm an Auror not a bloody politician." She screeches, in a dignified way of course.

"Well someone competent has got to do it. And you're sure as hell not going to get me to be Minister!" I roar in response, biting back a shudder at the very idea.

We yell at one another for a while longer, and I come to the conclusion that she enjoys being Director of Magical Law Enforcement just as much as I do, and doesn't want to be Minister for the exact same reasons I don't. "You know who was made Minister last time? Scrimjob; and he's just the disaster waiting to happen that you'd think he is. You are literally the only person who can do this effectively, so you don't have any choice."

"Last time?" It's Kingsley, he must be following what's going on better than most, or maybe he just wants us to stop shouting.

"Last time yeah, the first time I defeated Voldemort." So maybe I am dragging this out more than I need to, but I'm having fun so screw it.

"Harry here is a time traveller." Neville helpfully breaks in, running my good time.

"Fine, I'll give you the timeline if keep quiet, especially you Bonesy." When I'm confident they are not going to interrupt I continue. "On June 24th 1995 straight after the Tri-Wizard Tournament, Voldemort is resurrected by Peter Pettegrew. Not much happens until June 18th 1996 and the Battle of the Department of Mysteries, Sirius Black's death signifies the beginning of the second war. Scrimgeour walks into the Ministers office because the only competent candidate is killed by Voldemort.

On August 1st 1997 a few months after Albus Dumbadore's funeral, the Ministry falls to the Death Eaters. I pretty much vanish off the face of the earth and return on May 2nd 1998, setting off the Battle of Hogwarts. I defeat Voldemort by setting up a backfiring wand..." Albus catches my eyes twitch to his side "...and even though loads of people had died there is a huge celebration party, one which I miss as I had fallen asleep wishing I had a sandwich. Neville on the other hand has a threesome with Daphne Greengrass and her girlfriend." That last, with a nod to my friend was not strictly necessary to the briefing, but I believe it has its place.

"I become a fully qualified Auror in less than ten months, and end up Head of the D.M.L.E. by the time I hit 22. Depending how you count it we had somewhere between fifteen years, and a quarter of a century where things were pretty damn incredible, the world was at peace, everyone got married and shot out a bunch of kids. Everything seemed like the perfect, storybook happy ending following a terrible war.

Then things started going downhill; Dark uprising after dark uprising, Goblin Rebellions, assorted other magical creature Insurgencies, Dark Lords and Dark Ladies all trying to our evil one another. We did what we could, and it didn't seem all that bad at least in the early days. I mean, Neville and I were kicking around, it basically just took one of us showing up to end a battle.

Then about eight years ago things took several turns of the worse. We lost some good people around the same time this prophesised saviour showed up. He was meant to deal with one of our more irritating Dark Lords. The kid was a FirstGen named Logain, born in the suburbs of Chicago years before in what was the United States.

I liked him, he had good foot speed, he would take a hit and keep on at you, a lot of natural talent there like I say.

He got himself killed of course, and I had to deal with the guy myself." Imagine that. "A friend of mine, Astoria Malfoy, came up with this idea two or three years ago. She claimed she could effectively send me back in time, and I could change things so that all of those wars would never happen.

I was a bit shirty on actually doing that because when I got all the details out of her, she couldn't be sure which way her formula would resolve itself. Essentially one of two things would happen; I would find myself in my younger body and create a parallel timeline of alternate causality. Erm, simply put I would be creating an alternate universe while the other universe would still be running just as it was, only without me in it.

Or; the other eventuality would happen, and my memories returning to my younger body would destroy the first universe, and I would personally be responsible for the deaths of what?, almost two billion people, as well as the unmaking of millions upon millions more individuals who were now, never born."

The implications of this settle on the room for a while in silence, of all of them it's Sirius who finally comments "Seems like a bit of a risk don't you think?"

"That's exactly what I said! And that's also why it took her so long to convince me. Although in point of fact, it was actually my eldest grandson, Sirius, who eventually convinced me."

His eyes light up on hearing his namesake. I lighten the conversation a little while the others work through what has just been dropped on them. "Yeah, Sirius Lupin. He has the blood of all three Marauders. Prongs through me, Padfoot through your cousin Tonks, and Moony through my godson Teddy... I made him get a runic tattoo representing the concept 'Marauders Heir' when he turned fourteen." I grin a bit at the memory, though his grandmother would hurt me if she knew about it.

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It does not take the room too long to get back on topic, so after a little natter I continue the briefing. "While I take things Diviners and Oracles say with a large pinch of salt, I do have a healthy respect for some of what their branch of magic can do. For one it was my being one of those prophesised world saviour types, fully vetted by a True Seer and everything, which allowed Astoria's method of time travel to work.

She originally wanted me to go back to the day I killed Voldemort when my prophecy was fulfilled, or if not that then 1981, the moment I got my scar and became 'Marked as an Equal'.

Still, I managed to wring out of her that there were some 'minor Node Points,' and that she might be able to get me a bit earlier in the timeline, so I could save quite a few more lives in this war as well.

Today was/is the day in which the full wording of my prophecy was denied to both Voldemort and myself. Denied until the point was moot I should say."

Albus Dumbledore takes it upon himself to slow down the meeting "As fascinating as this is, perhaps we could hear more as to why you have settled on this most dangerous course of action to solve the problems you were experiencing in your own time."

I thought I was busy covering this "Like I was saying, it's Oracles. What they say can be ignored for the most part because their words only make any sense at all in hindsight. What is troubling however is when they all start... agreeing, with one another. And worse when they start filling in gaps in each other's predictions.

And blaming me for all the doom, as if it's somehow my fault they keep Seeing doom."

And Doom. Merlin I hate hearing that particular noun. Doom, doomy doom of dooms. For the love of-, I must have been forced to hear the word Doom at a minimum of fifteen times a day for years and years and doom, I mean years.

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"...otherwise he and I could come to some sort of arrangement, and both be immortal" – Lionheart

June 18th 1996: Hogwarts Headmasters Office  
23:19 Sidereal Time

"If we have finished chattering about the nightmares of futures past, how about we get on with killing Voldemort again please? Most importantly how is Hermione, will she be on her feet before sunrise?"

"Yes, your muggleborn girl is to be spun back six hours and delivered to Hogwarts Hospital wing right as rain. Is she really that important to your plans?" This is fortunate news, though I do scowl at the way she is addressed by Amelia.

When I don't respond our reluctant minister instead growls "Do you know a Healer Stanhope by the way? He seems to be under the impression that he treated you and Mr. Longbottom earlier this evening."

"Yes, I do and yes he did. And yes the FirstGen girl is, of vast importance I might add." It takes me another moment to drag my own thoughts back to what I'm supposed to be doing, never mind that I've just chastised the room for their chattering.

"Voldemort isn't really that big of a deal, I have a plan to get rid of him. A plan so brilliant nothing can possibly go wrong, I guarantee." There is a predictable room-wide eye-roll at my statement "Okay, the exact wording of my aforementioned prophecy is as follows:

'The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches ... born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies ... and the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not ... and either must die at the hand of the other for neither can die while the other survives ... the one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord will be born as the seventh month dies ...'

I allow a brief pause before soldiering onward.



"Allow me dissect it for you; born at the end of July 1980 means either Neville or me, and marked as an equal narrows it further to me alone, as I'm the one with the scar.

Now the interesting bit is the 'neither can die while the other survives' part.

While we're on the subject, inane comments about socks aside, this is the only time I can be absolutely certain Albus Dumbledore actually lied to me. Straight out lied, rather than rely on proxies, half truths, or misinformation as he is so well-known for doing. Preferring these methods in place of directly lying where he risks getting caught.

What the prophecy is getting at, in a mealy-mouthed prophecy like way, is the fact that my famous scar is in fact a Horcrux. A sliver of Voldemort's Soul which while still attached to my body means that he cannot fully die... And incidentally neither can I."

There is an appreciable amount of sentiment along the lines of 'oh gods what are we going to do,' 'an immortal Dark Lord; impossible' and 'we're all going to die'. Sheesh, what's with these people, do they not remember I've already done this once before.

Let alone my having recently told them about an awesome plan.

"What exactly is a Horcrux?" That's from Perce. Or should I call him Percy... Nar, I didn't treat Neville like he was younger, I'm not doing anything different with my other friends.

"Why I would love to tell all about Horcruxes Perce, allow me to regale you an ancient tale from our history...

Four thousand years after the Atlantis Cataclysm there was a massive war. A Dark Lord, the creator of history's first recorded Horcrux, and master of an All Seeing Eye, used his army of twisted humanoids to terrorise the fire blasted remnants of civilisation, and after his first defeat lived near a millennia as a Shade.

This was in a time where Dwarves still resided in their Maintain Halls, High-Elves walked the earth, and Mages and Normals still thought of themselves as the same race. It took a child named Sam and his unnamed sidekick to drag the artefact across the whole wide world

and toss it into a volcano, while the alliance of old Atlantis, a pact between three great nations, battled the Dark Lord into stalemate. He was destroyed in accordance with the prophecy but the world as it had been, was never again the same."

This is a listed history by the way.

I seriously doubt any in this room bar Dumbledore have been deep enough in the Magnus Fontis to read about it. Yet, for all it happened six and a half millennia ago, this is an integral part of our history, I sometimes wonder what would have happened had that war ended differently.

High Elves, lost knowledge, the Fae, Dwarves who have their own culture and aren't relegated to dressing up as cupids for some deranged lunatic of a Defence Professor.

Perhaps something analogous would have happened had I not gone along with this fool time travelling expedition, and the human race would have one day faded into legend.

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I once again shake myself out of these musings and go back to briefing the bickering children.

"Anyhow Voldemort, back in the days when he was still Tom Riddle, the good little Slytherin boy plotting world domination, came across the Horcrux ritual. If you look at his idea academically, and the fact that he actually managed to pull it off, it is nothing short of genius. Maybe he should have been awarded his Mastery in Evil for it.

He did one hell of a lot of spell-crafting and Arithmancy, eventually working out a way of splitting his Soul not in half creating one Horcrux, like the nameless old Dark Lord in the story, but in lesser fractions. So instead of a fifty percent split, he went for fourteen percent slices, thereby aiming for six Horcruxes, and an Arithmantly significant seven part Soul."

I look around the room, and despite the avalanche of information I am giving them, people are for the most part following my words.

"He screwed it up and went insane. Before he attacked me as a baby he had five shiny Soul Anchors hidden safely throughout Britain, and a little under twenty nine percent of Soul was still walking around killing people. He accidentally transferred some percentage to my scar without knowing it, and when he got a homunculus body in 1994, created what he thought was his sixth. Meaning he currently has something between zero, seven, and fourteen percent of his Soul inhabiting that snaky looking thing he calls a body."

A brief break and Tonks eventually cuts in with "So we have to find and destroy these Horcruxes before we can kill He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named?" Perce is nodding as though he was about to voice similar sentiment.

"No as it happens, Neville and I destroyed most of them this afternoon." The rest of my audience is suitably impressed by this claim. "Out of the eight chunks of Voldemort only three remain; my Scar is first which I will handle tomorrow, his pet snake Nagini is second, and Neville's team are going to tag it while I'm busy. When those two are dealt with it's just down to Voldemort himself, piece of cake."

Perhaps it would have been polite to inform my friend he would be leading a team, prior to my announcing the fact to an entire room filled with highly respected and influential people.

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"...he had clearly been in and out of hell several times already and was familiar with the terrain" – Thanfiction

June 19th 1996: Hogwarts Headmasters Office  
00:05 Sidereal Time

Flying high on Invigoration Draught or no, I am getting tired of talking and I want to get the hell out of this room. I've allowed the good people of the Order, and the new Minister's entourage a fair while to discuss amongst themselves.

While I have been answering a few of their vaguer questions here and there, it's been mostly prattle if you ask me. Now it's about time

we get back to task, I need a team in the field in four hours, and they need to understand their part in the plan.

Albus's eyes are flitting between feigned unconcern and mild irritation. This may have something to do with his repeatedly using thrusts of Legilimency in an attempt to understand my unknowable Occlumency barriers. Good luck to him, the Unspeakables have invested tremendous amounts of energy trying to figure out whatever it is I'm doing differently, all to no avail.

"The team is going to portkey to an as yet unknown location. They are to track down Voldemort's familiar, the snake known as Nagini. Their objective is to administer this Substance..." I hold up a vial of clear liquid procured in London "...without being spotted by any Death Eaters if at all reasonably practicable."

"What kind of potion is it?"

"It isn't a potion. Any magical tampering would be discovered by Nagini herself, or if not her Voldemort surely would. Neither can we use any mundane forms of tracking, being as the high magical field around Voldemort's evil base will destroy the electronics. The answer we came up with is to somehow get this Substance, which has like thirteen syllables, into the snake's bloodstream. I can track her altered scent, so that we can kill it at a later date."

The mission is simple enough, I'll let them decide amongst themselves how to administer the solution. They could hit her with a dart, inject it into a conjured animal and feed the animal to her, or any of a thousand different methods.

Delegation means allowing those you delegate to, to come up with their own plans.

I also get a few strange looks from my describing a Dark Lord's headquarters as an 'evil base'. Like this is a children's story or something. Whatever, dark wizards really play up that stuff, why can't I be cavalier in my dealings with them?

"Why don't we just kill it now?"

I roll my eyes, why don't people think before asking stupid questions "If Voldemort knew we were targeting Horcruxes, bad things would

happen. He would figure out what we're doing and change his whole attitude, becoming far more difficult to defeat. I don't want him to grasp that he is dead until after we've killed him.

I need volunteers to join the team. Anyone who has a problem with following Neville's orders should say so now. You all need to coordinate and come up with a strategy. I'll get some Dreamless Sleep Potion, you are all to have three hour rest before the portkey activates."

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Ninety minutes later sees Neville, Kingsley, Mad-Eye, Tonks, Emmy Vance, and Luna deep in the arms of Morpheus. I didn't realise Luna was even here, she must have snuck in 'quite by accident' in that way she does, or perhaps she tagged along with the Ministry people and just sat quietly in a corner.

I'd like to talk to her at some point soon, Luna is... important. She, along with Hagrid, is one of only two people I've met in my life whom I would consider wise, and well, I've missed her.

"There are far more experienced people who could be leading that team. You know that, and yet you put the scion of Longbottom in charge anyway. Why?"

Amelia really does remind me strongly of her niece, observant and to the point. That's what I liked about her back when Sue was one of my top Aurors.

"I'm reasonably sure I know where the target is, and I know this is a low risk mission. I know Neville can do stuff like this with his hands tied behind his back, but he doesn't. I guess I just want him to prove it to himself. With me ending this war early he won't get the opportunity to lead people like he did last time."

We're moving down to another part of the castle, she is alert, if more than a little bleary eyed. I told her this would be boring but she asked to accompany me regardless.

"You took him with you this afternoon, and you're putting him in charge of an Operation. Who is he?"

"Neville Longbottom, Lord Longbottom I should say, is the guy who won the war against this Dark Lord. It wasn't me, all I did was kill Voldemort." She clearly wants me to explain. "Sue told you about this year's Defence Club I'm guessing"

"Dumbledore's Army?" Yes I did grimace "She may have mentioned it over the Solstice. I thought it was about learning to pass exams and sticking it to that... person Umbridge."

"Pretty much sums it up yeah. Well during seventh year Voldemort had control of the Ministry, and the Carrows were in charge of the school. Cruciating students left and right, generally being Death Eater scum, blah blah, all the good stuff. I wasn't here because Hermione and I were out scouring the countryside for Horcruxes.

Neville took over the Army, and turned the students into actual soldiers. Organised resistance, and basically kept the whole school from capitulating to the Death Eaters. By the end of the year he had fifty or so of the Army, each skilled enough to take on most Aurors out the academy.

Susan was 'Longbottom Trained' as well, and even though she was only one of my Aurors for six years, I found it nigh impossible to replace her after she left.

Neville did more than just lead students though. He seemed to know instinctively that there would be a battle at the school, so he had all his best people to come up with a strategy to use against Voldemort's forces when they arrived.

So when the remnants of the Order of the Phoenix showed up and the fabled Battle of Hogwarts rolled around in May, he sets about coordinating with teachers and what adults were actually involved, outlining a fully fleshed out plan while they had all been scrambling about like headless chickens. His forces were linked up with a group of professional Quidditch players who were used to recruit militia from around the country.

Pretty glad he did actually, because without those last minute reinforcements we would have been overrun by Death Eaters anyway, despite Voldemort having been destroyed.

What makes it still more impressive though, not only had he not yet turned eighteen, but he was doing all this with a massive limiter on both his mind and magic."

Using the book taken from the Black Library, I pour the Ash in the pattern described, being very careful not to waste any, and being even more careful to keep the lines and arcs exactly right.

Founder's objects in place, I double check everything to make sure I haven't made any mistakes, then cast a powerful repelling ward around the whole area preventing it from being disturbed.

"He sounds like quite the hero."

"Who else could handle being married to Ambassador Susan Bones?"

It's a shame she wasn't taking a drink, her reaction would have been better with a spit-take.

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"Half the time I expect Hugo to grab an Invisibility Cloak and ask me if I want to go on an adventure to find the Philosopher's Stone" – cloneserpents

June 19th 1996: Hogwarts Hallowed Halls  
02:22 Sidereal Time

For the first time in several hours I don't have anything to do. All my plans are going smoothly and I have a chance to take a breather before leaping back into action. It would be nice to have an hours kip but I don't think that's a good idea, I've been going out of my way to avoid the Headmaster and I don't particularly want to get pinned down.

I'm on my way back from a visit to the Owlery and Hedwig.

It was a strange feeling coming out of this war, so many people I was close to had died. My parents, my friends Cedric, Fred, Tonks, Remus, I was close to all of them and they all died in this fight. And what about Dennis Creevey, who never forgave me for 'getting Colin killed,' no, there was a lot to handle in the aftermath of Voldemort.

What's strange though is that losing Hedwig was the one thing I never really got over. I never got another owl, or even consented to a family owl. It just never felt right, like a betrayal of her memory or something. Even watching Sirius fall through the Veil was something I eventually dealt with, and he was the last connection I had to a normal life.

"Screw it" I come to a decision.

I was going to wait a little later to do this but why the hell not. I'm alone, and I won't have to get into another rambling conversation with someone, this time regarding my Soul Bond relationship with Voldemort.

It's ever so romantic, in the highest traditions of hack romance novels everywhere.

I lock myself in an abandoned classroom and overcharge all thirty three security wards. Conjuring a full length dress mirror and a towel, I place a reflective shield on the mirror, and some cushioning charms on the floor. I bite down on the knotted towel and raise my wand toward reflection Harry.

This is going to hurt like crap.

"Legilimens" It comes out muffled and nigh incomprehensible.

Well remembered pain from back in the good old days assaults my mind and senses. I'd be screaming if not for the gag, as my world famous scar bursts open, splattering life's blood all over the mirror.

I don't let up. I'm doing this for excellent gods damned reasons, but oh hell, it hurts.

The faint grey beam of mind magic floods in and out of my vision, though its connected to my scar and I don't really need to see it. Bypassing an Occluded mind through a Soul connection in order to find the location of a pet snake, this has got to be worthy of being written up as an article in Advanced Thaumology or something.



Flitting through Nagini's mind I come to her locality, and better yet, her intention to remain where she is unless summoned by her master. More than enough information to create Neville's Portkey.

The agony continues unabated as I bypass Tom's Occlumency using Nagini's familiar bond.

I'm searching for a branch of magic I've coveted for years, and concluded Voldemort had invented it himself. He must have because no matter the incredible lengths I went to in order to discover the secret myself, no knowledge, or even rumour of knowledge was ever found.

Eventually I black out from the pain.

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I stroll into the Hospital Wing at three thirty in the morning quite cheerfully, I've been told to give Hermione a few more minutes rest before waking her. For some reason they've brought Ron to Hogwarts too, and he's awake looking at me.

Bugger.

I don't hate the guy, not in the least. It's just well. I'm closer to his wife than he is, and Hermione has a special kind of vindictiveness when commenting on his personality, words, actions, and life in general.

One memorable phrase which leaps to mind... 'Ron's loyalty is matched only by his intelligence' ...struck me as needlessly harsh, as it is unquestionably true.

"Did they tell you about the time travel?"

"Yeah, for some reason they used a Time-Turner to bring me and Hermione back six hours." So they didn't tell him, and he's pretending to know what he's talking about.

"I meant how I've travelled decades back into the past, fought Voldemort, unseated the minister, organised the resistance, and basically am no longer the Harry you knew when you went to the Ministry."

"Oh. No they didn't tell me about that."

You know what, he did actually come to the Ministry with me. And he was sort of a friend back when we were at Hogwarts. Maybe I owe him one.

"You wanted to be an Auror when you were younger if I remember correctly. Fake Moody gave you the idea."

He makes vaguely agreeing noises. I guess from his point of view being younger was only last year, and the way I phrased it might have been confusing to him.

"Neville, Hermione, and I won't be spending all that much time at Hogwarts from now on. With Ginny moving to America, you'll be pretty much on your own for your two N.E.W.T. years. No brothers, and nobody overshadowing you. I'll make sure Sluggy is teaching Potions, and you might even have a shot at Quidditch Captain in seventh year.

If you take all the required courses, and get good enough grades to make it into the Auror Academy. And you do it all under your own steam, I suppose I'll do my best to make sure you get in the best training team. Basically you'll be on the fast track to Senior Auror." This is probably a very bad idea. If he does the work though, maybe his life will be different. "It will take a lot of hard work mind."

It strikes me that I did something similar with Ginny, although I admit to having far more selfish motivations on that score.

"If you're from the future, do you know if the Cannons ever win the League Cup?" So much for giving him a chance to change his life.

"RON!" I shout, probably far too loud, seeing as we're in a hospital. "Your laziness and stupid obsessions with Quidditch and Chess are going to fuck up your life. You're not going to be in school forever... Here, you want to know some things about your future, it's not all sunshine and roses for you."

I see resentment and a tinge of fear in his look, as he dumbly nods.

"Shit dead end job because you dropped out of Hogwarts and refused to sit your N.E.W.T.S. after the defeat of Voldemort. It wouldn't have been that bad but your Order of Merlin Second Class could have been turned into some worthwhile career if you'd worked at it like Hermione told you.

You get married to a woman whose way out of your league, and I end up fathering both of your kids. You spend your days drinking spiked firewhiskey and constantly getting Obliviated.

One of the birthday presents I got Hermione was an old-world curse, of the kind which is on Hogwarts Defence Position, and it made your food taste like ash when eating in the company of other people. She was so disgusted with your table manners that I got a whole lot of... let's call it thanks for that one."

Rant over I feel kind of bad. A fiercely uncomfortable silence descends on us.

"I'm not sure if the Cannons ever win Ron. I stopped following the Leagues after the 2010 World Cup. That was when the reformists banned the Snitch."

"They banned the Snitch." He cries out sounding horrified.

"Yeah, they were whinging on about how it ruins the game." Attempting to win back the title of 'Golden Osmagogues' from Krum in our annual charity snitch-hunt is always fun, but Quidditch has never really been the same for me. It probably has something to do with my being rubbish at passing.

"You might want to get some sleep Ron. Think about trying for the Academy, you really don't want to hit forty and still be a virgin."

I did mention his wife hates him didn't I?

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"...once he had seen perfection, why would he need to return" –  
BajaB

June 19th 1996: Hogwarts Hospital Wing  
03:43 Sidereal Time

Sunrise is at 4.26am this morning, that's in forty three minutes. I need to get a read on this chestnut-haired goddess fast, but looking down at her sleeping form I almost don't have the heart to wake her. Not even seventeen, you can see in the lines of her face the woman she is, and the woman she will become. Beauty like a renaissance oil painting, and certain knowledge her image will only improve with age.

'Harry, you're hesitating. Hesitation is about as attractive a trait as ill manners or lack of confidence.'

'Of course I'm hesitating Harry. She's sixteen and I'm all but in my sixties. You saw the way my eyes were raking across Min McGonagall, she is closer to my age range than any bloody teenager.'

'You yourself are only sixteen Harry.'

'No Harry, I'm not. Not in the ways that matter at any rate.'

'... 'Arry, do be quiet. 'Zis is Mi'Own, 'Zere ees no way you are letting 'Er go.' An ephemeral French voice asserts its opinion.

'She's right Harry'

'I know Harry. I get that, it's just y'know what if...'

'You are Le Survivant 'Arry. You are to begin acting like eet'

'...'

'Harry'

'Hm?'

'You're hesitating again.'

I take a deep calming breath and sit, tenderly taking hold of her hand. This is Hermione, it's going to be a breeze, and it'll be fun.

She always makes it fun.

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Over the years following the Voldemort defeat we used to have this long running game, where we would attempt to come up with viable methods of removing the Soul Fragment from my body without resorting to taking another Killing Curse from the Dark Lord.

In the middle of a battle.

When he might decide to kill me using a different curse.

Is in fact more likely to use a different curse, given that Avada Kedavra-ing me has proven unsuccessful in the past.

This was all long before I had the notion of doing any form of extreme time travel, we were just doing it for fun, speculating in a kind of long running joke.

Anyhow, we came up with twenty fully viable methods of removing the Scar Horcrux. The nineteenth being 'capture the Yew wand and have someone directly hit my scar with the intention of killing Voldemort.' The idea being that the wand which created it being the best to use; I was hit with the Elder Wand last time by the way.

Depending on certain things, a modified Horcrux ritual, one using an enemy rather than an innocent to slice away the parasite, is around tenth best. If you're interested, I'd probably use Wormtail, the Life Debt would help... and killing Wormtail would be as much fun as killing Snape, which I unfortunately can't do as I promised not to.

The twentieth, and least best solution, would be to do it exactly the same way as I did last time, allowing Tom to hit me again. There is no concrete evidence that I would survive being killed again, but as I did survive last time it seems likely I would once more.

However doing it this way is tremendously dangerous.

If you assumed the incredibly unlikely possibility I was going to live, and then did the appropriate Arithmancy, you'd come to the conclusion that there is only an evens chance that the Horcrux would be hit. There is exactly the same coin-flip probability that I'd die, and you'd have a second Voldemort running around.

With my body.

My magical core.

And likely the world at large thinking this Dark Lord is a Saviour.

You can see why I'd prefer to do it using a less trixy method. That method was actually suggested by Fleur many, many years ago. It was her first thought when asked how she would do it, '...'Arry 'ze solution ees simple non, Sex Magic.' It's not just because of her Veela heritage either, the woman is a sex obsessed maniac, I wouldn't be surprised if that was her first answer to any problem posed to her.

She found a book from the Châteaux Delacour Library which outlined a number of purging rituals that could be used in this situation.

Ritual magic is not in fact Dark, as most people assume. I mean yeah, if I had to torture a bunch of puppies, or eat a family member or something, then I would agree that it was evil. But ritual magic is about sacrifice, and all the Dark Rituals out there involve sacrificing pretty horrible things to gain pretty horrible benefits.

Take Tom Riddle for instance; I can't believe he had the balls to do some of the things necessary to ensure his immortality.

Oh, that's right, he doesn't... not anymore.

The Ritual I have set up is based on the number four, the number most significant with regards to healing. The intricate Cruciform I am using was shown to me all those years ago by Fleur, in the book from her family Library, and is of an identical form to that used in less reputable rituals.

This is how I could use the outline taken from a manuscript in the Black Library.

The Cleansing Ritual I intend to use stipulates the use of something more magically potent than chalk or sand in drawing the Cruciform, and it is suggested that I use pulverised semi-precious stone, or some other magically enhanced material as a boost.

I'm using Phoenix Ash.

Nowhere in the world would you find a ritual which demands the use of Phoenix Ash.

Many other rare ingredients such as Basilisk Venom can be found even in Knockturn Alley if you're willing to pay ruinous sums for them. No matter how rare these types of ingredients are, they can be purchased. Conversely, Phoenix Ash can't be found anywhere, at any price. For this reason it is never stipulated in any texts because you can only get it one way, if you have your own Phoenix.

Someone recently swiped a jar from Dumbledore's Office. I have no knowledge as to who it was.

The reason I'm using it, is because it has magical potency several orders of magnitude greater than any other material save Magicite, and the Ash is even better in this context because of its close ties with rebirth.

Now I also have four linked founder's objects, each with powerful enchantments, and each designed to be used in their own assorted ceremonies.

A Sword linked with Summer and Strength  
A Diadem linked with Winter and Wit  
A Locket linked with Spring and Fortune  
A Cup linked with Autumn and Fettle

You can guess why I was so happy the Dementor method of Horcrux destruction actually worked. Having a quartet of linked magical items to use will give a bit extra juice to the ritual, and is likely going to have some remarkable side effects.

Nevertheless, Ceremonial Magic is about sacrifice as I said, you have to give up one thing to gain another. And this is the Rite of Karmic Fire; which necessitates the willing sacrifice of a person's virginity. Perfect for this situation as it is a Soul Scrub, and all dark twisted parts of a person's Soul will be consumed by the light of rebirth.

Given the ragged, evil nature of Horcrux magic, the Soul Fragment has basically no chance of surviving.

So with the aid of a young-beautiful-English-virgin-girl, I plan to sacrifice my sixteen year old body's virginity, during the previously detailed Ritual of Cleansing. It also helps that I have an emotional connection to said young-beautiful-English-virgin-girl. Emotional connection usually makes these things work even better than they would otherwise.

Sounds simple enough, but there is a reason I'm so gods damned confident this plan is going to work... each of the disparate elements; Phoenix Ash, Founder's Objects, Double Sacrifice, hell I'm even scheduling it during a Midsummer Sunrise. All these things don't just add together, they compound one another.

Thereby multiplying the effectiveness.

The Scar Horcrux is toast, but here's hoping medical won't make me go on a two year charms and potion regimen to heal all the damage done growing up the way I did.

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"Hermione ... Why do you think I gave you that book?" – cloneserpents

June 19th 1996: Hogwarts Library  
05:55 Sidereal Time

"We didn't really have to do it in a library did we?" It's not really a question. She may have bought all that claptrap about Lay Lines intersecting the third floor, she could have but I doubt it. Any uncertainty was erased as soon as she noticed the section of the school's library the Ritual just had to be performed in.

Notable in that it is the same section in which both school copies of 'Hogwarts a History' are stored.

"I couldn't think of an organic way to claim you were required to play harem girl." She blushes at the idea.

I really like this young version of Hermione, it's so easy to squeeze a blush out of her. Then again it was always going to be fun fulfilling a woman's deviant sexual fantasy, while being able to claim it is totally



required for some good old fashioned world saving. Sort of takes the responsibility off her.

The room is a mess from the overpressure wave released on the stroke of sunrise. The stacks are all leaning away from the centre, as if from an explosion, there is also a thick layer of some kind of clear sticky substance covering everything in sight. I imagine that's probably a result of all the damage which was Cleansed.

And I also think it's going to be a good idea to be, not here, when the Librarian Irma Pince shows up.

Oh, and I feel great. Better than great actually, fantastic. It's like I've been on a tropical beach for three weeks of solid rest. And had a full year of really good sex all crammed into a single moment.

"Are most people's... is the first time always that good?" She asks as I'm in the process of nibbling her shoulder.

In the hospital I had told her about my coming back in time, inferred a few things and basically gave her a run down on this war.

Maybe I also described a dream she had on Halloween in our first year, strongly implying I knew exactly what kind of dream a twelve year old might be having. A dream that involved a damsel in distress, and a heroic troll rescue... amongst other things.

I also told her about the Scar Horcrux.

She wanted to help.

"I admit I may have gone a little overboard. I have missed you y'know." We're going to have to get up soon unfortunately. No rest for the wicked, a group of people of which I am definitely a proud member. Corrupting innocent English girls, bad boy, go to your room and think about what you've done. "You want to come to meet the Wizengamot with me Hermione? They don't let FirstGen in unless accompanied by an Ancient and Noble Lord."

We untangle ourselves and I catch her peeking, covering her embarrassment she states "I think you're taller." So I give my body the once over.

I believe she is right, all my scars are still there; Toad, Rat, Dragon, Basilisk, Tree, Uncle, Killing Curse, but they all look long since faded. The lasting effects of long term malnutrition, Cruciatus exposure, and Basilisk Venom are all probably healed too. Along with Hermione's recent Flame-Cutter wound, not that I spent a long time checking, much.

I drop a quick measuring charm; 5'10".

"You're right, I'm three inches taller than in the old timeline... Nice. Shame my eyes are still messed up but I guess you can't fix genetics." I apply magical lenses to my eyes, a spell I dislike due to its having to be reapplied every couple of hours. Really only useful at three in the morning when you need to pad to the toilet. "Are you coming to the Ministry then or what?"

"Try and stop me, you can't just have your wicked way with me and then run off mister." She controls her blush better this time, alas I believe it signals the beginning of the end for her innocence "And why do you keep saying FirstGen instead of Muggleborn? You were doing that during our conversation in the Hospital Wing too."

I slip into what I've always thought of as my 'Hermione Lecturing Voice,' the one I use when I'm imparting a large quantity of information onto someone else. It occurs to me that I've been using this tone a lot since coming to the past, weird.

"Using the word 'Muggle' is so bigoted Hermione. It comes from the deterring charm 'Repello Muggletum' used to fend off those with weak will or those without the spark. In context this means calling someone a muggle is like calling them inherently weak.

And it is not political correctness either, the etymology of the word is, and always has been, meant as derogatory. It was only when everyone else started using their favourite swear word that the inbred bastards had to come up with 'Mudblood'. A word which you can agree is stupid, and far less offensive."

The look on her face is the one familiar to all those who know her, she is absorbing the new knowledge like a sponge. Her look changes abruptly to another, one which I'm must more used to seeing on an older Hermione, when she is in a rather specific frame of mind.

"We don't have time for that Hermione," Insatiable wench.

I think she heard that last part, oops, she looks strangely pleased even if I didn't mean to say it out loud.

Casting a few simple cleaning charms she asks "So why the change?" She means why did people stop using it, not why people would be offensive for no reason.

"After this war there were still people who wanted to know how magic actually worked, and they predictably discovered that there is no difference. You're either born a Normal, and can't see ghosts, or use potions or what have you. You're born with Latent magic, and can use potions, floo, portkeys and such, everything save a wand. Or you're born with full magic, and you can use all the cool magic things, carve runes, and hold a wand.

So Muggleborn became FirstGen, because people like you are First Generation magic. And in most cultures are considered lucky. Following?" She's nodding along so I'm guessing yes. "It's also partly because it came out how rare FirstGen actually are. Ask the current Ministry and they'll tell you that about one in four children coming into Hogwarts is a 'muggleborn'. Whereas it's actually more like one in fifty. People like Penelope Wood who were actually sired by an Imperius switch, or Dennis Creevey whose mother is a Latent cast out from an old family" and add to that the fact is that Dennis LeStrange just doesn't quite sound right to my ears.

At a leisurely walk we collect the protected dress robes Dobby had lain out for us, and wander from the devastated library.

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"Oh god, we just destroyed a library. I'm going to go to library hell for that!" I knew I should have just Apparated us through Hogwarts wards before she noticed this. I didn't because frying her brain by doing 'impossible' things too early and too often is probably a bad idea.

Now I'm starting to doubt the decision.

"It's okay. Nobody knows we were there, and nobody can prove it was us. Though I suppose Amelia will probably be able to figure it out, but if she's as much like Susan as I think she is, she'll probably just think it's funny."

This was clearly not the right thing to say to sooth the troubled witch. I contemplate telling her about my libraries in the hopes that the plural will distract her long enough to calm down, but the likely side-effect will take too much time, and I have places to be.

"That. Is. Not. The. Point. Harry Pote-" I cut in.

"Tell me that you know about the Wizengamot. We're going to the Wizengamot. I need to know that you know what we're getting into." Please work, please work, please work.

Her desire to continue her trade wars with her desire to answer my question. I think I must have been giving her a pleading, hopeful look or something, because she capitulates choosing the latter.

"The Wizengamot is the judicial and legislative branch of the Ministry, and Wizarding Britain's high court of law and Parliament. It is a continuation of the old Wizards' Council which existed until 1692 and the establishment of the Statute of Secr-"

"Very good Hermione, how about we stick to the modern organisation?" She really could give a flawless quote of whatever book she'd read that in. The blame lies with her semi-eidetic memory, and I'd recommend against playing poker with Rose for the same reason... bloody card counters.

"It is lead by whoever holds the title Chief Warlock and is made up of fifty-one seats, broken up into three sections of seventeen seats, with the old families holding the most prestige. Recipients of the Order of Merlin can gain a vote in the second block as a reward for services to Wizarding Britain. The last block of seventeen is a little vaguer, and seems to me that gaining a vote is more about politicking and family alliances."

I'm impressed, not that she'd read all the books of course, but that she has somehow managed to put together a close semblance of how it actually runs.

"Do you know how legislation and such gets proposed, tabled, rejected, and passed?"

"Certainly. It takes a third in agreement for the Wizengamot to even discuss a topic, otherwise it gets thrown out. It's twenty-six for the lesser consensus, and thirty-four for the greater consensus, which is half and two thirds respectively."

"Well done Miss Granger, ten points to Griffindor. For twenty points can you tell me if a person can hold more than one vote?" Her smile as getting the right answer fades to a frown of concentration. This is not a question many people think to ask.

We head out the castle toward the front gates, with Hermione deep in thought as she eventually answers. "I'm not sure, I don't think it comes up very often. I don't believe there is any actual law against it though."

"Correct, on both counts. It almost never happens because one person is rarely the head of two families. And people who do stupid things and get themselves an Order of Merlin First Class are rarely stuffy old Heads of Houses. I mean a real First Class, not the honorary ones which people like Fudge get. And, a person effectively can't get a vote with using Order of Merlin Second Class if they already have one from their Family Ring.

For example Dumbledore, whose family is a low branch of the Parkinson line linked about 200 years ago, and so could have gotten a vote in the third block by politicking, if he didn't already have a First Class.

I think the last time multiple votes came up was in the forties when an entire light side family was wiped out by Grindelwald's forces and two houses had to be merged. This briefly handed Abraxas Nott two seats, until his untimely death, when his son and daughter split back into two families."

Trudging down the dirt path my companion concludes "You have more than one vote don't you?"

"Yep, I have three. And so does Neville. One from an Order of Merlin, Two more for having two Family Rings." I say this with a happy smile.

"I see that gleam in your eye Harry, this can't be good."

"I don't know what you mean." She's right of course "Well okay fine, you know how there needs to be seventeen affirmative votes to stop people forcing the discussion of superfluous things?"

"Ye-s." She says warily

"Well, one April Fools' Day Neville and I took our six votes, and after letting a few of our other friends in on the joke... we sort of attempted to pass a piece of legislation, using the guise that we wanted to tax it, which would require all British citizens to register how many times per week they intended to have sex."

Hey, it was funny at the time. The people who took us seriously may not have thought so, but it really, really was.

We cross the ward line and I offer a two-person portkey to Hermione, as she contemplates the sheer depth of my idiocy.

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"I will be beautiful, and terrible, with knowledge beyond imagining. And all will love me, and despair" – Technomad

June 19th 1996: Ministry of Magic, Level 8, Atrium  
06:38 Sidereal Time

Sauntering through a slowly filling Ministry with a stunning woman on my arm, I briefly wonder how well Neville is doing on his first Operation. The last I saw him, his team vanished to the forest behind Greater Hangleton using the Nagini portkey.

He'll be fine. All those stories I told him about his future self, and the newfound power reserves he can draw on has to have got his confidence back to appropriate levels. It's not that I need him to help kill Voldemort, it's more the aftermath I'll have to deal with.

There is no way in hell I'm doing all of that on my own, I can tell you that much for free.

I confess that I'm far more concerned about fucking up the Neville situation than I am letting on. Neville is basically me. And there is only so much one me can deal with on his own. One me would probably end up doing something stupid like travelling through time in order to solve his problems.

"Crap. Erm, Hermione will you do me a favour please?"

"Is it a favour along the lines of 'may I claim your virginity' or does it require slightly less sacrifice on my part?" Oh no, her overly sweet sounding voice is laced with sarcasm, I'm going to be paying for that one for ages aren't I.

"Not like you were complaining at the time" I grumble "No, just. We need to get a private room, and you have to do something for me."

Now that came out differently from how I meant it. As is made known by her sceptical eyebrow raise.

"No, I. It's not... arg! Get in here." I drag my infuriating companion into an empty office and conjure a pair of industrial grade bolt cutters.

"Sirius is alive again, so I am no longer head of the Black family, and I don't have my Order of Merlin yet, so I'm left with only one vote on the Wizengamot. And that comes from the Potter Ring so it doesn't count.

That's okay because I recently came across the Gaunt Family Ring, and I'm confident that it'll accept me as the new head of family. On the other hand if it doesn't then, there will be an amount of screaming, and possibly some death. And I need you to slice off my finger with the bolt cutters if that happens..." She blanches at my request so I follow up with "Or you could stand there and let me die horribly. Ever so horribly. It'll be really, really horrible." I try for a wide eyed look of virtuousness which probably fails utterly.

"What makes you think another family ring will even accept you. The defensive magic on them is supposed to be incredibly strong."

"Oh that. Tom Riddle was the last head of Gaunt and he died in 1981. The Gaunts are extinct and Tom and I are related through the Peverells back in the thirteenth century, which makes me as close to him as anyone else. I also did a bit of trickery on the thing yesterday,

so you probably won't have to maim the love of your life using bolt cutters. Probably."

She likes the 'love of your life' line, even if she won't admit it. Girls are suckers when it comes to crap like that.

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"My crest has changed" I whine in annoyance, looking disdainfully at my shoulder and the declaration patch. I'm dressed as a member of the Pureblood Aristocracy, lengthened hair tied back and in robes of the classic cut. "The Griffon is the same, all rampant and cool looking. But the Black Shield it's supposed to be standing on is gone."

"Stop being a baby. You said yourself that you aren't head of the Blacks anymore, why are you surprised?"

"But I liked my crest, it was cool, now it's got a bloody snake on it. Look! It's trying to strangle my awesome Griffon."

"It is not trying to strangle anything. It's draped majestically over you're precious Griffon's shoulders. Besides, you knew the Gaunts we're descended from the Slytherin line, what did you expect?" She's completely missing the point. It's not what I expected or didn't expect, I now have a crummy looking crest, can she not just let me mourn the loss. "Stop pouting Harry, you have a second vote for today's little meeting, that's what's important."

"I am not pouting."

"Are so"

"Are not. And it doesn't matter anyway, I can't use the second vote until I kill Voldemort. The Ring was a Horcrux, and the plan says I can't alert him to the missing Horcruxes until after he's dead."

"Stop. Stop. Stop... Are you saying you could have waited? And had someone else on bolt cutter duty?"

"Ye-, No. Of course not. Don't be preposterous." She's about to start yelling at me, I can tell "Oh, look at the time, I have to go talk to the



Wizengamot now. Such a shame to cut short out discussion of family crests."

I try to flee the room but she hits the door with a scary-powerful locking spell. Isn't she supposed to be an innocent sixteen year old? Where the hell did she learn that?

I cast my mind about, and come to an obvious solution.

"How about I make it up to you Hermione, would that be okay?"

She glares over with an imperious look better suited to a Queen than a schoolgirl "After we're done with our work this morning we can maybe track down your parents. And we, I don't know, memory charm them into thinking they are a happily married Australian couple named Wendell and Monica Wilkins."

I breathe a sigh of relief as her eyes widen in recognition of her secret fantasy. It's an oddly adorable sight.

"How did you. I'd never, it was just a thought. I'd never really do something like that Harry, I'm not evil... I'm not honest."

I've met her parents, they're jerks, not total bastards in the same way as my relatives, but it's still blatantly obvious why they never visited her when she was petrified by the Basilisk, or why she spent virtually no time in their company since she turned fourteen years old.

"You did. And you would. Although you told us that it was to keep them safe from Death Eaters. It was only at your wedding, when I asked why they weren't there, that you told me you'd never reversed the memory charm. And I finally coaxed you into telling me the full story."

Mouth hanging open, she's dumbstruck. And I'm glad to have sidestepped her previous ire. "I really did it?" she part asks, part states in a wondering tone.

"Yep. And we'll do it again if you want to."

"I really never meant to you know, it was just idle thoughts..."

"Hermione, I've met your parents, and I like the Wilkins' family much better. For one, the Wilkins' are far more accomplished surfers." She giggles, once more proving to me how good a Dark Lady she would have made.

"Strike hard, strike fast, and leave chaos in your wake" – jbern

June 19th 1996: Ministry of Magic, Level 2, Wizengamot Chamber  
08:00 Sidereal Time

"For corruption, and gross incompetence leading to the rebirth of the Dark Lord Voldemort, I call a vote of no confidence in Minister Cornelius Oswald Fudge"

I have just crashed through some double doors and bellowed the statement at the top of my lungs. No preliminaries, no 'any old business,' none of the usual etiquette, I cut right through all the crap and get to what they think this meeting is all about.

I'm working with that old saw 'politics really is about who can cheat the most in a...' oh, I made myself sad. Fleur always used to hit me when I tried to apply that saying.

"Well, what do you have to say for yourself Fudge? It's entirely your fault all this happened." Pretty much completely untrue, but fuck it this is politics. Nobody cares if what you're saying is true or not.

Anyway, you can guess what happened. It was a landslide.

I get Amelia voted in as a second order of business right after. She'll have to schedule a full election within twelve months, but she's Minister right now, and that's all that matters. Dumbledore is in the position of Chief Warlock, he must have worked his arse off last night to get himself completely reinstated to all his positions.

How nice for him.

"Third order of business; I have been accepted by my family Ring and recognised as Lord Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter..." I raise my right hand to show them "...I have been tried on August 12th last year, as an adult, and found innocent in this very chamber..." I sweep them with The Unforgivable Gaze for a moment to show them I'm displeased. The trial was actually downstairs, but whatever "...And finally, I have been forced to compete, as an adult, in a dangerous tournament two years ago. A tournament which I will remind you all, I won. Despite being several years younger than any of the Champions who actually volunteered.

Does any in this most venerable institution doubt my status as adult wizard, fully emancipated and capable of making my own decisions? Given my wealth, status, and having successfully completed the O.W.L. examinations for magical competence."

When I put it like that, they'd be fools to disagree with me.

And they all know it.

The comment implying vast wealth is interesting. Without the Black Fortune from Sirius or the LeStrange Fortune from robbery, I'd still be pretty well off. Fifteen years of compound interest while I was growing up will do that, but I'm far from Croesus. Yet implying I'm incredibly wealthy actually makes a difference to these people. After all rich people are inherently better than poor people, and very rich people are even better than normally rich people are.

As the august body rolls over for its master, I notice Albus' eye twinkling is reaching near record levels. He knows where I'm going with this I think.

"Forth order of business; My Godfather, Lord Black, was sent to Azkaban without trial, or even questioning under Veritaserum, and has since escaped. This was due to the negligence of the Fudge administration..." Lie, it was Millicent Bagnold and Bartemius Crouch who sent Sirius to prison without trial "...Should I capture Lord Black would the Wizengamot acquiesce to questioning before giving him our most feared punishment; the Dementors Kiss?"

Reminding them that Sirius has a Seat here, and so the Kiss could theoretically be given to any one of us is enough to get them to agree. Roll over, there's a good boy. Blaming the whole thing on Fudge helps too.

I dramatically pull off the Cloak of Invisibility, revealing my hidden companion "Lord Black?"

"Lord Potter?"

"Lord Black!"

"Lord Potter."

"Lord Black, what in heaven's name are you doing here?"

"Well Lord Potter, I recently heard that I would be given a chance to prove my innocence."

"That is right Lord Black, you are spectacularly well informed. Auror please fetch some Veritaserum for our distinguished guest."

Fighting a grin at our shenanigans I conclude that Sirius is an idiot, just like his namesake. What's also quite amusing is that Ministry has sensors which detect Invisibility Cloaks, and none of them went off.

So I've also made the Aurors look like jerks.

I love my Hallow.

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"Fifth order of business; I suggest we increase funding to the Department of Magical Law Enforcement in light of the newly revealed threat of the self proclaimed Dark Lord Voldemort." That mass shuddering happens again, I'd forgotten how often people used to do that.

Maybe I should point out that it's not technically my job to chair this meeting, nor should I be talking to the Wizengamot members from the centre of the room like this is some kind of show. Still, what I'm putting on pretty much is a show, and I doubt anyone here is going to stop and think about what I'm doing, while I'm here in the middle of doing it.

After I get them to agree to a funding enhancement I move onto my next plan "Right you are then, Sixth order of business; I am not just a member of this fine institution, I am also Harry James Potter. I kill Dark Lords and fight evil. It's my calling, perhaps you've heard of me? They used to call me the Boy-Who-Lived when I was a child"

Here's hoping that they stop calling me that thanks to my rather specific phrasing. Furthermore it is worth remembering that the members of this organisation have been reading their kids bedtime stories about me, so talking like I'm a friggin' super hero is something they halfway expect.

"From my unique perspective I believe it is the Fudge administration that is responsible for this current Dark Uprising. He tied the hands of our former MLE Director, and led this situation to be inevitable. I will not allow this to happen again, and with a competent Minister in charge I believe we can make real changes."

That's right I'm blaming everything on Fudge again, really just never gets old. Shame I can't do it after today, oh well, best get as much mileage out of him as possible.

"So this is my proposal; if you agree to offering me double the current bounty, and appoint me, Harry Potter, Director of Magical Law Enforcement, I will defeat Voldemort for you."

"You little brat! That's why you made me Minister of Magic, you were after my job the whole time."

"I am sure I have no idea what you are suggesting Minister Bones, I am simply doing what I feel is best for Wizarding Britain."

She's right by the way, I've already got additional funding, now I'm trying to scam my old job out of these people, and offering to take care of their Dark Lord problem for a small bribe will probably get me it.

She'll get over it... eventually.

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To be Arithmatically significant I'd better come up with a seventh order of business off the top of my head. "Well, I'll not take too much more of your valuable time ladies and gentlemen of the Wizengamot, but I do have one further matter to discuss which you all may find interesting.

Ahem.

For the crimes of line theft, asset mismanagement, failure in his duties as replacement magical guardian, and numerous cases of child endangerment, I challenge Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore to an Honour Duel, by the ancient rights of combat set in place by my ancestors."

Take that Twinkles you pathetic sack of shit. His mouth drops briefly before his whole aspect flashes with rage.

"You cannot do that, the duelling code was revoked a number of years ago as a method to settle disputes." Random Wizengamot member number four inserts.

"True, however I am an Ancient and Noble Lord, and as such am above such pedestrian concerns. Additionally I would like to point out that the craven illegally holds the offices of Chief Warlock, Supreme Mugwump, and Grand Sorcerer. Three positions which have traditionally always been held by three different Mages so as to prevent corruption and deceit.

In the current circumstances I do not believe it would be possible to bring the cur to justice using less hasty methods. If the cowardly old fool wishes to avoid meeting me in honour, then all he must do is step down from his places of nobility, and never again meet my eye. For I will strike him down with great vengeance and in furious anger if he does."

The thick silence drags on following my statement.

A statement which sounds to me as though I must have stolen it from a movie. Though the use of the words Cur, Craven, and Coward, are actually necessary to the Duelling Formula; they're called fighting words, and even though they sound silly, you have to use them.

The unnatural quiet drags on until some brave soul asks the question "Can you prove any of your charges?"

"He covers his tracks well but I was able to find one piece of paperwork directly linking him to his crimes. Paragraph four, subsection thirty, of form hexagon xx oranges; the signature of Albus Dumbledore approving my use as bait in Diagon Alley, to aid in the capture of escaped mass murderer Sirius Black during the summer before my third year." I'd told Sirius earlier I was going to do this, so he waves cheerfully as the entire chamber looks to him.

"This was before anyone knew he was innocent! ...Unless you wish to claim you knew Lord Black was innocent the whole time? Do you

Albus? Because I can challenge you to a duel for that crime if you would like."

"I do not believe duelling is the best way to solve our differences Harry, and we need to work together to face the threat posed by Voldemort at this time." He's going for the old grandfatherly image but if you look closely you can tell he's furious.

"Oh but I do believe this is the best way to solve our differences; still I will attempt to convince you as to the correct course of action. Please allow me to read from your Chocolate Frog Card:

The Dark Lord Albus Dumbledore  
Currently Headmaster of Hogwarts

Considered by many the nastiest wizard of modern times, Dumbledore is particularly famous for his seduction of the dark wizard Grindelwald in 1945, taking credit for discovering the twelve uses of dragon's blood, and the robbing of his partner, Nicolas Flamel. Professor Dumbledore enjoys child abuse and anal sex with his good friend the Death Eater Severus Snape.

Oh man I've wanted to say that for forty years.

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"All water under the bridge. Kind of tinged with red and metallic to the taste" – mira mirth

June 19th 1996: Ministry of Magic, Level 2, Outside Wizengamot Chamber  
10:05 Sidereal Time

Hermione appears almost as furious as Dumbledore, but she is not the first one to reach me "Mr. Potter do you wish to comment on your allegations toward Headmaster Dumbledore?"

"I think we covered them quite well during the meeting Rita, don't you?" I flash my Lockhart smile. "All that is left is to duel, piece of cake."



"Do you really believe you can fight Albus Dumbledore, the greatest wizard of the age? He singlehandedly vanquished Grindelwald, are you not concerned?"

"Ha!" I bark. I slide up to her as if I were about to inspect those three golden teeth, and spin her against the wall our hips pressed firmly together. "Tell me Francine, how much do you know about the very, close, personal relationship, between Albus and his old friend Gellert?" This is whispered almost silently, as I take a deep slow breath, inhaling of her heady aroma.

Then I disengage leaving her in a stupor.

She'll eventually question how I know her real name is Francine, but for now I have an incensed witch to deal with, one who is bearing down on me. I would have gotten away too if it weren't for a bunch of kids, and that meddlesome dog. "Hello Padfoot," I say brightly "how is freedom treating you this fine morning?"

Hermione ignores us and practically screeches "What do you mean by challenging Professor Dumbledore to a duel, what has he ever done to you?"

"To be fair, most of that Chocolate Frog Card probably isn't even true. Rita Skeeter over there," I gesture in the dazed woman's direction "was the one who suggested he wasn't the one who did the Dragon's Blood discoveries, so I kind of doubt the validity.

Given that I've actually met Nicolas Flamel I think it's safe to say the 'Philosopher's Stone' we saved in first year was actually just a big red chunk of Magicite. I have no idea how Dumbledore actually defeated his friend, and I do not know, nor do I care, which team Snape is duelling for."

"So what did you say it for?" Tonks asks, though she probably already knows. Sirius sure as fuck knows why I did it.

"So he'd fight me. The prick needs an arse kicking, and he'd died before I could give him one last time." I shouldn't have said that 'last time' comment without being behind a Dome of Silence, but the 'Muffliato' we are using is probably good enough. "He has to fight me, that or step down and lose all credibility..."

...It's funny too. That may be a big part of my motivation."

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I'd managed to forestall their questions long enough to get to a more private area, it's 10:18 and now they want answers.

"Spill, what did he do?" Was Tonks always the gossip type? Teddy would have liked to know that, Lily would have been happy to know she wasn't alone.

"Everything. He's the-, okay, I'll keep it simple. I grew up in Surry with the Dursley family."

"You're blaming Professor Dumbledore for placing you there, what about the Blood Wards, isn't that a good reason? It's supposed to keep you safe." Hermione doesn't really get a say in this, she's important to me, but still a little naive.

I'm-, I am being unfair to her. She just doesn't understand.

"Let me go through the events which led to my being raised by wicked step parents. Lily and James Potter are both murdered by a Dark Lord on Halloween in the early eighties, fine. I have no grandparents on either side as all four have died during the prior war.

My next of kin is my father's friend, my godfather Sirius Black. Unfortunately due to a series of stellar decisions he lands himself in Azkaban, and as such is in an unsuitable environment to raise a child." Sirius kind of winces at that, though it's not really his fault.

"Next on the list is my mother's friend, my godmother Alice Longbottom. This would have been brilliant, I would have grown up calling Neville my brother. However shortly after my parents grizzly murder, is the grizzly incapacitation of Alice and her husband Frank. As St. Mungo's is just as unsuitable an environment as Azkaban, we must go still further down the list." Lost in my story I don't even glance to see Neville's reaction.

"Remus would have been nice, in a fairytale kind of way. Unfortunately those who suffer from lycanthropy have far fewer rights in our society than those who do not, and so pushing for

custody of a magical child would be about as effective as attempting to fly around the world on a broken broomstick.

While not strictly illegal, it is certainly unusual for a magical child to be placed with non-magical guardians. There are many reasons for this, narrow-mindedness for one, but most notably is the danger a magical child poses to those who cannot deal with, or even understand the effects of accidental magic.

So no, my mother's sister Petunia Dursley is not the person next in line for custody. Given that my next of kin is a Black, it falls to his closest non-Azkaban family member; Narcissa Malfoy nee Black. Right you are then, such a smashing idea, nothing bad could possibly happen in that situation whatsoever.

So it's a tossup between wicked step parents, and evil murderous bastards. In those circumstances it may well be understandable to pull a bunch of strings and have me placed with my closest blood relatives, the thaumaphobic Dursley family.

Feeling a little better about Dumbledore's decision?

What day did I wake up on the porch in front of Number 4 Privet Drive?

Oh, that's right, November 1st. Before Sirius was arrested. Before the Longbottoms were attacked. Meaning that fudge packing wanker would have had me in my cell, for ten fucking years, regardless of all the crazy shit that happened to my parents' friends and family."

I exhale long and slow.

All water under the bridge.

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I think the level of dislike at how I was made to grow up probably shone through there, I'm not even sure if anyone tried to interrupt me during the rant, and if asked, I couldn't tell you how my dead friends and family reacted when I made it.

"The Blood Wards kept you alive though." My lost love utters in a small voice, her face hidden in her voluminous brown hair, I think she's about to cry.

And that's it, that's the reason I hate Albus Dumbledore; the Blood Protection. Capitalised, it's essential you capitalise important things.

When I say hate, please remember that I don't hate people. I can't even successfully cast the Killing Curse. I don't hate Vernon Dursley despite everything, I massively dislike the man for obvious reasons, but there is no energy behind it, it's not hate.

I don't hate Snape either. Who the hell holds onto bad feelings about arseholes you met at school. Pathetic people. Wasted people. People like Severus Snape. No, I can't bring myself to hate Snape.

Fuck me, I don't even hate Voldemort. He's a Dark Lord, and he killed my parents.

So?

That's what Dark Lords do. They kill people's parents. They come and go and cause massive damage, heartache, and pointless loss of life. But you can't hate them. You may as well hate the Hurricane that destroyed your house and killed your dog. It won't help, and you won't feel any better, and it won't stop the next Hurricane.

So when I say I hate Dumbledore...

"I mentioned before how taking an AK was not the best way to deal with the Scar Horcrux. You remember?"

"Yes, I remember Harry." She answers. I think from my deadened tone Hermione picks up just how bad this is.

"Dumbledore knew this too." After a pause I continue. "Dumbledore's plan to stop Voldemort was human sacrifice, he wanted me to die and take the Horcrux in my scar with me. But more than that, he intended for me to willingly give my life to his cause."

I find myself oddly happy that my friends' eyes bulge at this announcement. All but Neville, who looks like stone. There is more and he knows it.

"My death would reaffirm my mother Lily's ritual, and the guardian which protects against an attacker's magic. Freely giving my life in this way would place the sacrificial shield on all those I'd intentionally died to protect.

Having twenty or so of my friends immune to Voldemort's magic would make defeating the Dark Lord fairly straightforward. And that is not even taking into account when it actually happened, it wasn't twenty, it was hundreds.

Each one with protection.

Taken in the abstract I can acknowledge it was a pretty good plan. Provided you don't stop to consider the horrific implications of twisting my mother's intent in such a way; her sacrifice was to protect me, and instead Dumbledore kills me for the guardian.

Implications aside however, the plan itself had a decent chance of success. I go to Petunia and the guardian stays alive long enough to be useful, knowing Voldemort would eventually return. So raising an innocent child to be a tethered goat could be considered... acceptable.

Under the circumstances.

Maybe.

What he did not factor into his plans is coming back to bite him. I am the Master of Death, the Boy-Who-Lived, and as such I do not go down that easily. So when I failed to die I learned of all his duplicitous fuckery. I was, and still am, pissed to high heaven about it."

I'm understating it, I do not like this feeling. I could kill that man when he was sitting on the toilet, or out visiting his aged aunt. The rage, I-, fucking hell, I could murder him in cold blood on a Sunday afternoon, when he's in a play park with an 8 year old niece.

"When did you become the Master of Death Harry?" Luna's seemingly absent question drags me from a dark place, gods I told you Luna was important didn't I?

I give a genuine smile to the cherubic blonde "When I was seventeen, but you gotta' keep it secret!"

"Yes Harry..." She wrinkles her nose prettily "...I was just curious"

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"...they were too different in some very basic ways" – S'TarKan

June 19th 1996: Ministry of Magic, Level 9, the Department of Mysteries, Duelling Pit  
12:00 Sidereal Time

At the stroke of noon the first salvo of pale yellow energy splashes across a powerfully cast, high-level shield, thus marking the commencement of our duel.

Half an hour ago we were organising the logistical things, and I learned that the Ministry's official duelling platform has been moved from a section of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, to an out of the way backroom on Level Nine which is usually kept sealed.

Molly had shown up at my request and was looking around worriedly as Ollivander was brought in for the official wand weighing ceremony. Unfortunately I won't win this duel in a pathetically simple manner as I had half hoped, with my Thestral wand refusing to fight me, and backfiring spectacularly on my aged adversary.

Alas the old man must have worked out I united the Hallows from some comment or other I had made. He never was less than incredibly intelligent, but I'd still half hoped for an easy win. The wand he is using is apparently 'Ash and Vipertooth 10 inches, good for Transfiguration,' and I'll go out on a limb and claim this is what he was using up until 1945.

When it came time to choose Seconds I'd found myself chanting: 'Please pick Snape, Please pick Snape,' over and over again under my breath. Just because I'm not allowed to kill him in cold blood, doesn't mean if it happens by accident I'll lose any sleep.

When he picked Snape I sort of yelled "Yes!" at ear-splitting volume.

Now I was ever so tempted to choose Aberforth Dumbledore to be my Second, not only would the look on everyone's face be Patronus worthy, but he'd doubtlessly agree. Neville dragged me to the Hog's Head a few weeks after the Battle of Hogwarts, and after being treated to a nice long 'I told you so' speech from the Headmaster's brother, I found I quite liked the guy.

Plus he's an excellent dualist.

One who hates Albus almost as much as I do.

So you can see why I was tempted.

In an ideal world, I would do what I always do in this type of situation. Get Neville to help. Neville always has my back when I do stupid things, just like I always have his when he does the same. But he's underage, and despite being full power again he's brutally undertrained. So while he'd agree to be my Second, it would most likely be best to give him a couple years preparation before dragging him into these situations.

Still, when I selected...

"Molly Weasley nee Prewett"

...it caused more than a little consternation, from more than a few parties, Molly herself in the forefront.

You see from everyone else's perspective, I'd just named a housewife to a highly trusted place of honour by Pureblood custom, and if she refuses then it will be seen as a grave insult to the House of Potter. So she can't really decline, and everyone thinks she's going to get splattered by the former Death Eater.

When you think of Molly Weasley you think of the overly caring (s)mother of seven, always in the kitchen and worrying about her children's safety. This is obviously a major facet of her personality, so talking to 'Molly Weasley; Housewife' will always get this (s)mothering reaction. This automatic response is the one she's been using for the last twenty or so years, and people for the most part simply think that's all she is capable of.

However my friend Molly was once awarded an Order of Merlin First Class and accompanying Chocolate Frog Card for killing the Dark Lady Bellatrix LeStrange.

And that is pretty Badass no matter how you slice it.

So you take a step back; rather than talking to 'Molly Weasley; Housewife,' you instead start talking to 'Molly Prewett; Badass.' You get a totally different reaction, and have a totally different conversation. She agreed to be my Second quickly enough once I threatened to tell the room 'the Copenhagen Story' and was forced to defend myself from a stray curse.

One she'd fired purely on instinct, which she always does whenever somebody threatens to tell that story.

Because that's who she is; and Prewett in '69 is a term you'll hear constantly if you listen to the Duelling Circuit on the wireless for any length of time. She was a champion, and had somehow managed to keep the fact from her whole family save her husband Arthur.

But she was on the cover of 1999's Witch Duellist, and there was a whole section describing her career. That kind of let the cat out of the bag. She's the one who taught me spell-chaining, even if I never did get chaining-on-the-fly down to her unnecessarily high standards.

On a historical note you might be interested to know, all the magic I used to defeat Bellatrix immediately after returning to the past, was stuff I'd learned from Molly, it seemed fitting. And it is, all too fitting. I briefly wonder if my wife were more like my friend-, No, the two women were too different in some very basic ways.

So with a twist of my wrist a burst of magic channels eleven inches down a length of Holly and Phoenix Feather, I whisper "Protego Maximus" at the stroke of noon, and a splash of pale yellow energy signifies the beginning of the Duel.

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I am standing in an approved duelling posture, though the style I was taught is a little on the Eastern European side. The wave of power washing over me is easy to ignore as my opponents first spell dissipates.



He's trying to use a Visible Aura to unhinge me, and it feels like we're swimming in magic. Thick and heavy enough that it would doubtlessly throw most opponents off guard.

A rapid "Concussus" sends a super bright flash of light wrapped around a deafening roar, a more potent magical equivalent of what the Normals call a flash-bang. As he's disoriented I conjure two dozen thumb-sized steel balls and wandlessly banish them as hard as I can using my offhand.

The boy hero scores a hit, and on his first casting. The crowd goes wild. Or at least I'm going to assume that they do until proven otherwise.

It's only a couple of glancing blows, but if he's bleeding I'm doing something right. Most of the pellets were deflected enough by the Headmaster, but the few that are left are transfigured into spears with wicked barbs on the end, spears which are now hurtling toward me.

If the old man is unnerved by my lack of magical aura he is not showing it. To counterpoint the man's obvious magical presence I went the opposite direction. Those using mage-sense to get a better feel on both combatants will notice the conspicuous lack of magic bleeding off me. As I've said previously, the Scary-Aura is nothing more than a party trick, wasting energy trying to intimidate your adversary. So I've clamped down, and would appear about as magical as Hogwarts esteemed caretaker Mr. Filch.

As the barbed spears are about to reach their target, three disillusioned predators shimmer into focus mid pounce.

Damn, the old man is good with his transfigurations and crafty as hell to boot. I didn't even notice he'd made them until they appeared, not a good sign.

An inelegant lunge sideways and three massacred animals later, I'm about to congratulate myself for dodging the spears, when I sense an intense surge of oncoming magic. Spell-chain, eep.

I twist off another "Protego Maximus" as fast as I am able, and pour in quite a lot more power in than should be necessary, attempting to

weather the storm. For all the guy's a bastard, it's agreed by pretty much everyone that he's among the strongest in living memory.

Nicolas Flamel's living memory.

So overestimating on my shields is the name of the game.

More than ninety seconds of continuous casting before I get back to my feet, or any chance to do more than turtle behind defences. Something niggles at the back of my mind but I don't have time to focus. A brief break in the chain gives me an inch to squeeze through one of my own.

All thirty one jinxes of a Greater Prewett pour out my wand, the last movements of one flowing into the first movement of the next, swishes, flicks, jabs, and twists. I have a vicious casting speed, the gods making it up to me for my slight build, and the amount of force impacting Albus' convex golden wall is beginning to crack it.

Whether through luck of design, he drops it just before I break through, twisting out the way of two oncoming spells with a youthful spryness which surprises me, Albus manages to get a thick transhield between us without being tagged.

Transfigured shields, or transhields are very useful, very durable, and easily capable of blocking Unforgivables. But man, getting the things thick enough and dense enough to be useful makes them total power hogs, he wouldn't have done that had he any other option.

A shit kickin' grin breaks across my face, 'you're going down old man.'

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"...there are times when reason fails and even saints reach for their sidearms" – Technomad

June 19th 1996: Ministry of Magic, Level 9, the Department of Mysteries, Duelling Pit  
12:16 Sidereal Time

The hum of the duelling ward and intermittent cracks tells me that we are about to split another ward-anchor. How many is that now three, four?

The ward is in place ensuring the safety of any spectators. No not spectators, witnesses, spectators are what you get on the Circuit when what we're doing is a sport. This is the real thing, so the wards are up to protect the witness of our little reckoning.

It is not like anything we do here could be counted as illegal, this is the way they did it in the old days. Unforgivables are fair game, holy hell we could do something exceedingly retarded, like start tossing about Fiendfyre, and there would be no legal means to stop us.

So all the excess magic which is being absorbed by the wards is cracking ward-anchors, and I can only hope someone has the foresight to ensure paranoid levels of redundancy. Otherwise it'll fall and we're going to lose some witnesses, I wouldn't like that.

A Sphere of Midnight singes my hair as we enter minute, gods alone know what, of the duel. This is not the first time the grandfatherly man has thrown a piece of blatantly Dark Magic at me. Some indeterminate amount of time ago he landed a "Comprimo." A curse which dampens an enemy's will to fight.

That was not a fun time.

Then again I'm hardly one to talk, as I managed to wrap his wand arm with a Cruciatus derivative known as the Agony Band. Far more localised than its famous counterpart, but I can actually cast the damn thing with some measure of skill.

We continue trading shots in the manner we have been for so very long now. You might think most fights last hours like they seem to in stories, but in actuality most duels are over in less than sixty seconds. Two well matched Master Duellists going at it would likely have reached a conclusion by the eighth minute at most, either because one or the other scores a win, or they're both spent. On the Duelling Circuit rounds are between two minutes and six, and I can tell you we have been fighting much longer than that already.

There it is again a little tickle in the back of my mind. I'm missing something, I'm sure of it. Bunkered behind my own transhield I

escape the barrage. The first time I conjured a barrier I was amused to notice the shield was embossed with my new crest, Serpent draped Griffon, but now I have no spare time for any thoughts beyond my escalating collection of injuries, battered rubble, and the animal strewn pit.

"Ran, Chan, Ho, Ro, Bo" One syllable blasting hexes, why not, I've gone through pretty much everything else, including all the nonverbal stuff I can use with proficiency.

Dumbledore is most skilled in Conjuring, Animation, and of course Transfiguration. Animation especially is a branch of magic I'm terrible at, though the others are not so bad. I once saw him Animate the Fountain of Magical Brethren in the Ministry and use them as sapient shielding.

Actually I've seen him do it twice now, that's strange. Anyway, it's a feat that I seriously doubt I could match, even if I had an hour to prepare.

You've probably noticed that I'm more into direct damage and speedy casting. If I were in this for the entertainment value I would market it focusing on how the differing styles match up, and basics of previous bouts amongst similar duellists.

As I torch the plague of rats I didn't see coming, and deal with a follow up Claw he had Animated, I mentally berate myself for getting diverted.

I have a double handful of minor burns, more than a little bruising, as well as a sum of cuts and assorted scrapes. The worst of which is on my left thigh, some form of Dark Laceration Hex which refused to heal, and I had to cauterise myself. The injuries aren't that bad, but the one on my thigh was a little too close to the boys for me to be entirely sanguine.

My opponent looks to be in better shape, but then I'm not him so I don't know. He could be thinking just the same thing I am, bemoaning how the young upstart looks to be in such great shape.

As I huddle behind yet another solid barrier it hits me, I know what he's doing, that little tickle on the edge of awareness; Cutter, Orange Fog, Hammer. Never the same spells preceding or following, they're

usually lost in the middle of other attacks, or used when he's coming out of some heavy transfiguration. Cutter, Orange Fog, Hammer.

I've got you now you fucking bastard.

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Things have been getting worse for the past several minutes, he landed something, I don't know what, and my mind scattered. Eventually when the world floated back into making sense again I had to open up a bear from crotch to throat. From the looks of things there were a number of other animals, as well as three shattered claws, and I gather I'd been unconsciously hexing the shit out them, only I don't remember doing it.

I'm still in this thing, that's good. On the downside my left would be completely useless had I not done an absurdly dangerous battlefield healing, I'm amazed it's still attached to be honest. Almost as bad I have an awful gouge beneath my robes courtesy of one of the animals. The bleeding is barely staunched and it's in need some serious treatment.

Albus Dumbledore is for once living up to his reputation. You know, I was all but convinced the man was all talk no trousers, riding high on his formidable name, with the Deathstick being the ultimate crutch.

I'm quite pleased to be wrong. He's using his own wand and his own skill, and he's actually giving me a challenge. I congratulate him, mentally, I'll not say anything nice about him out loud, but I do acknowledge his ability.

Now it's over and he's lost.

Bolts of lightning, conjured fire, sharp edge, and blunt force, he discharges the magic commanding it to go forth, intent focused solely on doing me harm.

"Protego Maximus" I say it loud, that's bad form Harry. I know, I do not care, it no longer matters.

You may wonder why I'm so fond of that particular magical shield. I mean come on, it's so middle of the road. It's on the N.E.W.T.

syllabus for crying out loud, you need to be able to cast it to even get an Acceptable, so it's not like everybody doesn't already know it.

Well, the reason it's so good is because of a rather unique ability it possesses, it can be altered mid-cast. This is not something you can do with any other shield I've seen, bar the basic Protego. And by altering it you can strengthen the protection of one specific spell, albeit at the expense of weakening the protection it offers to all other spells.

Consequently if you know the Hex, Jinx, or Curse which is coming at you, you can strengthen the shield against it. The incoming spell will cause virtually no damage, and you will expend almost no energy. Following so far?

Next, if you recognise the chain, or anticipate a small set of curses that an adversary is going to cast, you do the magical equivalent of humming a little tune. So if you know your opponent is using a Lesser P-Chain you go: 'Do, Re, Mi, Ti, La; -Do, Re, Mi, So, Fa, Do, Re, Do' it takes you virtually no energy, and well, whichever opponent was unlucky enough to be predictable is toast.

The Cutter is nearly transparent, with the Orange Fog connecting at almost the same instant as the Hammer.

It's mixed amongst others, and I have to palm an Ice Lance, but it's there; Cutter, Orange Fog, Hammer. As soon as I see the Cutter I harmonise my Protego Maximus. And simultaneously unleash a slow casting, high velocity Piercing Curse to finish.

How does ninety millimetres of tungsten strike you?

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As I stare down at the aged Headmaster's broken and battered body, a deep seated rage once more envelopes me. Just looking at him, massive gouge completely obliterating his shoulder, defeated and helpless, Merlin, Maeve, and Morgan LeFey herself rescue me but I hate this man.

The betrayal, the hurt, and everything he'd done to me. To this day I remember the trust I had in him. This was the one man I could count

on to do what was right for me. Mentor and idol wrapped into one, as well as guide in the hope of a better life.

He told me once that he cared for me, and that was why he kept things from me. The true all consuming knowledge that he really did believe that, deep down in his heart of hearts, he thinks he's a good man... Would a good man do it regardless, and look me in the eye us both knowing what he's done, and ask for absolution.

Saying that what you're doing is wrong and doing it anyway, and believing that because you don't want to do it, somehow makes it okay... I move toward him, eyes blazing with unrestrained malice.

I'm about to end the bastard's life once more, once more and once and for all.

A Phoenix flames in between us and trills loudly, a mourning sound reeking of the universe and all its unfairness.

"No"

"Trill" A feeling reminiscent of courage and greatness.

"Fuck you Fawkes, move"

Then it's different, but the same, and somehow more threatening.  
"Trill"

"Move! I swear to gods I'll wring your little phoenix neck if you don't move" I fumble a disbelieving laugh at the absurdity. Of my statement or the situation I really do not know.

A further warble of phoenix song and my wand tip is aimed at the bird, glowing unforgivable green. An action he answers with a belligerent tone, clearly stating 'Do your worst.'

"Fawkes-" I growl in warning.

A long series of trills, barks, warbles, and incoherent avian mutterings, all urge restraint.

"Fine" I push past my hated phoenix.

Taking a deep breath I instead stalk toward him and harshly gripping his throat with my maimed left arm I whisper in his ear "You picked a fight with an enraged time traveller who is immune to death!" With all the fury and hatred I've ever felt powering it, a right hook slams sadistically into his face, shattering teeth and dislocating his jaw.

I rummage through the man's robes and seize my Thestral wand, it'll stand up to any spell save Fiendfyre. After destroying his glasses I pocket the wand. Standing slowly as blood pours from his mouth, I stomp into his floating ribs, and smile at the sickening crunch.

"Fawkes my old friend, he's all yours" I state it flatly.

My Phoenix swoops down, flashing the defeated man from my sight.

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"Being your enemy must be so much fun" – mira mirth

June 19th 1996: Ministry of Magic, Level 2, Magical Law Enforcement, Medical  
13:10 Sidereal Time

After that Snape was pathetic.

I told Molly I was fine, and that she didn't have to fight. All it really took was The Unforgivable Gaze mixed with a flaring of my Aura. Of course I also hit him with an Independent's Special, y'know that jagged purple pain causing curse they're all so fond of, I vanished his pelvis and intoned something crass for the Memory Spheres before heading off.

I'm guessing that my purchasing twenty percent of the profits is going to be good financial decision. In fact, now that I think on it, I may have just invented Memory Spheres. The idea of using the Prophecy Sphere technology for sports casting at least. Could we buy them this early in the timeline?

Shit, I don't think we could... Oops.

There was some mention of going to St. Mungo's, or maybe even Hogwarts, but I don't really feel like talking the Headmaster.



It's strange, I'm not concerned with meeting him, of any kind of reprisal, or discussions about mending our relationship. I just don't feel like being in his company. But then, I don't particularly feel like being in Ron's company either, there is just no emotion there anymore.

"Can you just get on with it please, I'm sure it'll hurt but I'm a big boy. I can tie my shoelaces all on my own and everything." The Healer can't stop a snort of amusement while he does as I ask.

The left arm and my cauterised thigh are the worst of the wounds, though the thigh is the only one which will scar. I find myself glad I have a souvenir from that fight, I would have felt a little cheated otherwise.

Leaving the Duelling Pit I gave my friends an encouraging grin, which I have since found out was blood splattered, and as such, far from calming. The level of magic I was commanding garnered a few fearful looks from passersby as my friends hefted me up to medical, but we didn't really get to talk much.

There are a few hits I just don't remember taking at all. All the bones in my right foot have been fused, that's battlefield healing for when hit by a Bone Breaker, only I have no memory of doing it. I'll have to watch the fight again soon to see what the hell happened.

And kill Fawkes.

Killing Fawkes is a high priority. Hedwig is alive again, she'll protect me from my evil Phoenix.

"Phoenixes are not evil Harry" My bushy-haired goddess interjects.

"You know, your hair only gets wild like that when you're stressed. Usually it's when you're worried about me." I didn't mean to say that thing about Hedwig and Fawkes out loud, that healing potion must have me a little out of it. "And as for Phoenixes, they are so evil. Take it from a guy who is friends with one, he's only one step away from going berserk and killing everybody. You can see it in his eyes."

The Healer interrupts her obvious attempt at rebuttal "You'll have to stay off your feet for the rest of the day, and take these three potions

every three hours-" A flash of flame and Fawkes is hovering over me, a fine spray of tears mixed in, probably in an unwanted attempt to help.

"Screw you Fawkes, you're still going to pay, you know that right?"

He shrills indifference, but before he flames off again I counter "I have another avian you're going to have to deal with you know, she is going to teach you all about pain and suffering." And he's gone.

I receive a room full of incredulous glares "What? Never seen a guy threaten a Phoenix before?" Hmm, when I say it like that maybe it does appear a little strange.

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I suggested to Amelia that Rufus Scrimgeour be promoted to Head of International Magical Cooperation, and moved to Level 5. After I made it clear that I am not Dumbledore, she sure as hell isn't Fudge, and I was only making a suggestion, thinking how best to deal with a person I have no use for, she readily agreed.

I think that the potions I'd been given had me talking about some stuff with my visitors, but for the life of me I can't remember what.

The Healers eventually kicked everyone out, what is it with those guys assuming conversation gets in the way of healing, anyway I'm kicking back for the next few hours, and so I find myself thinking back to the events of the last not-quite a full day.

It's half-two in the afternoon, and if I had my Tactical Display I'm fairly confident it'd agree that makes it roughly 23hrs30mins on my personal timeline since I arrived in the good old days.

And my gods in heaven things are going well.

I should be astounded, I am astounded. Nobody is declaring me a Dark Lord, Neville told me in private how surprised he was that people naturally seemed to follow his orders, I seduced Hermione, I captured the Elder Wand, and I even got my job back as Director of the MLE. At sixteen for all these people know, sixteen! And best of all, I seduced Hermione.

Okay, I said that part twice. It is twice as happy a memory than the rest.

Still, this is not nearly as farfetched as my gut seems to think it is. I've been using the one lesson Voldemort really taught me, even if doing so was wholly unintentionally on his part; Play Big.

Most people don't try to play in the big leagues because they're scared by the level of competition, or perhaps the higher stakes. And the one thing I learned from Voldemort is that when playing at the top, there is in truth far less competition, and doing things that are impossible is surprisingly straightforward.

All it takes is balls.

When I was fourteen I was kidnapped during an International Event, the Tri-Wizard Tournament. I was taken from a super-high security area, right under the nose of thousands of spectators, the entire British Auror Office, and the protection of Albus Dumbledore.

An individual who, despite my personal feelings toward the man, is nobody's fool.

Not only that but we were under the wards of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, an impenetrable fortress, whose wards cannot be bypassed by any save the Headmaster himself. Well, strictly speaking there are workarounds, such as a Founder's Ring which must be specifically blocked, but none of them were used in the kidnapping.

To add further complexity, the kidnapping had to happen on a specific date; the 24th of June, three days after mid-summer. This was necessary for a Ritual as it was the optimal date for rebirth.

So from a planning perspective most people would say it too much of a challenge, and come up with an easier plan. This is fine. Easier plans are best. He could have found an easier target. He could have used a Ritual with a broader date range, and then ordered one of his people wait for an opportunistic moment and throw a portkey at me or something.

But doing it that way lacks, zazz.

It doesn't have the same impact, or air of impossibility which strikes fear into your enemies and leaves the ignorant masses gaping in awe.

So you stop and think; okay, if I was me, how would I go about a totally unfeasible kidnapping? How difficult would it actually be?

It helps that his minion's father was Head of Cooperation, and directly involved in the Tournament. Bam, Imperius Curse. You now have someone in authority that can nudge the schedule and have the third task on your required Ritual date. You do this months in advance of when it happens, so nobody will even notice anything has been changed at all.

Next step is to get your target into the competition, hard. And have your target win said competition, harder.

I would like to point out at this point that once my name came out of the Goblet of Fire, very little time passed before everybody knew Fake Moody was Barty Crouch Jr.

Not too get into it too much now, but I can tell you for certain that I've been Obliviated at least four times in my life, it could conceivably be more. I bought a Pensieve donkeys ago, and it cost me a ruinous 80'000 Galleons. By looking through my memories it became pretty obvious that I had a couple of blocks.

Two of which were me using the Marauder's Map to discover Fake Moody was not really Moody, and I was Obliviated because I would not have been able to keep it to myself. They didn't want anything to tip him off because he would slip away and they would then have no way to predict his plans.

If you're interested the other two times were when I hit Snape with a 'Reducto' during our 'Remedial Potions' lessons and shattered his pelvis, and the last was a third year duel with Draco that I only found out about at all because the man eventually showed me the memory from his perspective.

Anyway, that's all off topic.

Getting the target into the competition was the only part Barty had to achieve which was really necessary to the plan. Cheating to help me

was nice, but fuck it I'm Harry Potter, I was always going to win anyway, it is who I am. And anyone with the 'Power to Vanquish' our chessmaster was clearly going to win a competition against bloody school kids.

The winner of the Tournament is portkeyed to the centre stage to be named Champion, therefore the Trophy-Portkey is exempt from the impenetrable fortresses wards. Modifying the destination is so laughably easy that all it would have taken had both Barty Jr. and Barty Sr. been killed, was sending Wormtail to do it the night before.

So the impossibility of kidnapping someone in the middle of an International Event actually only rests on two things, Bartemius Crouch Sr. being under the Imperius, and getting the target's name to come out of the Goblet of Fire.

Doing it that way has zazz. There is no doubting that. All it takes it the balls to try something that most would write off as ludicrously impossible.

That is the lesson I learned from Voldemort. Though I will temperate this claim slightly. Playing big was the lesson I learned, but there is a good argument for saying that old Tom was just bonkers, and he pulled it off quite by accident.

The lesson itself valid though.

Look at what I've achieved over the last... now 24 hours; As a minor with no legal authority, I strip Fudge of his position as Minister, command Aurors to hand me a heavily restricted magical item; the Time-Turner. I then destroy all but one of Voldemort's Horcruxes, and have that last tagged.

I do this by assumptive confidence, implying I have all the answers, putting off explanations, and front loading the inevitable confrontation until a public meeting of the Wizengamot. One which I pulled off with ease, thanks to their fears from an unexpected return of the Dark Lord, and by lying out my arse.

It helps that my plan has retardedly huge levels of redundancy, but whatever, things are looking good.

Fuck the impossible.

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"He knew at the time he had asked the red-head to be his bride..." – cloneserpents

June 19th 1996: Number 12 Grimmauld Place  
22:12 Sidereal Time

I had downed my fourth trio of healing potions, and finally discharged myself from medical. I must have slept some, as the rest of my day just flew past. Luckily none of that trio was the potion which was making me all wobbly and out of it.

When I finally track down Hermione she doesn't seem all that happy for some reason. I wonder if something has happened, I know that if Dumbledore died none of my friends would give a crap, not after the way they reacted to my story about him. I tap on the door frame.

"Knock, Knock. How's things pretty lady?" No, she's not happy. She turns away from me without speaking. "Erm, are you okay Hermione. Sorry I didn't say goodbye, I think one of those potions they gave me had some side effects. I hardly remember you guys leaving."

"You knew about that thing, what I always wanted to do to my idiot parents. You said so, and I've never told anyone."

"Yeah" I say my confusion growing

"And you said that you wheedled it out of me at my wedding?" I did, Hermione, Fleur, and I had a good laugh about it actually. I make some kind of agreeing noise. "Tell me about my wedding Harry."

"What are you getting at Hermione?"

"Who was I getting married too Harry Potter?" The girl, no woman, is trying for anger but she's sounding borderline heartbroken.

My mind races through all our conversations since waking up in the Department of Mysteries Battle, and my thoughts jar on one horrible realisation "Y-you were marrying Ron..." She's figured this out of course. I'd never even implied she'd married me "...I didn't mention that did I?"

Really not a question, she just begins sobbing as I move over to her, but keep careful not to actually touch her. Eventually she murmurs something, I don't hear it, but I know what she's saying.

"You're nothing like them you know. Not one thing is the same." Her eyes flash in fury "What happened in medical to make you all leave?"

"You started talking to Bill, only you were calling him James. And then, then when you were corrected you declared that Mrs. Weasley was right about something, and how you never really believed they could be anything alike." Yeah, Molly always said James looked like her eldest, but the scars meant I could never really picture it.

"You found out about Fleur didn't you" Shit. Shit. Shit. I'd been meaning to talk to Bill Weasley since I got back. Kind of let him know that just because you can get into a woman's pants, doesn't mean you have an idea what to do once you're in there.

I did not however, intend to do so in front of his whole family, doped up to high heaven on whatever shit was in that potion.

"You're just like my father." Oh, that's a stinging blow.

"I'm not, I'm really, really not. And you are nothing like your parents, I swear." A less than ladylike snort of disbelief greets my comment.

"Did I, the other me, even know you were playing all three sides?" What? Of course she knew! How could she not kn-

My eyes bulge. Oh, now I get why she's so upset.

"Hermione look at me please..." She does so reluctantly "...you are thinking that your future self goes around sleeping with other peoples spouses, like it's a sport or something equally trampish... Aren't you?" She's about to respond when I cut over her "You don't. That's not you. You're a beautiful, capable, intelligent, and faithful woman. One of the best I've ever known. Don't ever change, ever, ever change from being the woman you are!"

"But you, Fleur Delacour... You and I were never married." I take my time rubbing my temples, this is just not part of the plan. I sort of lie back with my eyes closed and take a crack at explaining.

"We weren't really cheating. Well we we're and we weren't, its-. The whole situation was one clusterfuck of epic proportions. To start with, you and I were both single. I'd broken up with Ginny Weasley before we ever set foot out of Hogwarts. Before we even started our pathetic camping trip to find the Horcruxes... and on that score I have some advice I've been meaning to share:

Gamp's Law of Elemental Transfiguration states; when embarking on a scavenger hunt lasting an indeterminate length of time, remember to pack food."

I was hoping for some humour there, but I guess I shouldn't be surprised to be disappointed, oh well. My hopeful smile drops to a grimace.

"So we are on our own for months on end, little or no contact with the outside world. Just you and I, and a standing annoyance in the form of Ron Weasley. A man you had somehow convinced yourself you were in love with.

Newsflash little girl; arguing is fun sometimes, but when the comments regularly turn hurtful it's not sexual tension.

We eventually get captured, and end up imprisoned and tortured at Malfoy Manner. Actually, of the three of us only you were Cruciated for any length of time, but it was a pretty horrible experience all round. Dobby dies saving our lives, Luna's life, Master Ollivander's life, fucking bad situation all round, and emotions were running at tremendously high levels.

Now add into this Bill Weasley, someone who isn't even that bad of a guy. I'd been intending to have a little talk with him at some point, and from the sound of things that's what I was trying to do earlier, when I was stoned out my gourd. He's not that bad a guy, and he has the skills which can get him into the pants of any red blooded girl walking the earth.

Bill Weasley; who had married the still virgin Fleur Delacour, was and still is, the most awful lay in the world... It seems to be a



Weasley trait." I smile wanly. Although if I had to guess I'd say Molly probably knows her way around the bedroom, she hardly acts like a Weasley at all.

"Fleur is of Veela decent as you know, and as such sexuality is very important to her. Since getting married seven months prior, her Beauxbaton friends had stopped spending time with her, so it had been ages since she'd gotten properly laid.

Not that I'm making any excuses, I'm just telling you what happened. She was treating some of my injuries, and somewhere between the pain, and the grief, and the sheer physical necessity... we, we made a mistake."

"This is not making me feel any better Harry. You fucked someone else's wife, something I swore to myself I'd never do..."

I'm starting to get frustrated "Well maybe if you were in the situation you would feel differently. Hell I don't know about anything you did or didn't swear, all I know is it happened."

"Yeah. You fucked someone else wife. You're just like my fucking father." Right, I've had enough of this whiny bullshit, I do not like to be compared to that arsehole, and now she's just doing her best to be hurtful instead of listening to the fucking story.

"No, actually Granger. We fucked somebody else's wife. We. Not just me. So how about you swivel on that, and get the hell down off your high horse."

"W-we?"

"Yes we, as in you and me. You were trying to stop us getting caught I think. At first anyway. Then all the same shit washed over you as did the rest of us. A chance to take a break from a war that you and I were fighting, on our fucking own, no help from the outside, no teachers to run too, it was down to two teenagers to end a whole fucking war. You can see how that might be a little stressful. And on top of everything you'd been recovering from the Cruciatus as well, I know from experience that being physical helps."

I'm breathing a little ragged, and I'm glad I had the presence of mind to chuck up some privacy wards during that. It was a mistake, I get that. But I plainly do not know what else we were supposed to do.

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Hermione doesn't look that great I've gotta say "If it makes it any better, none of us were very pleased with ourselves." Another wan smile "As soon as we realised what we'd done we scattered, didn't even make any hint by word or gesture that anything at all had happened."

We're both quiet for a long time.

"How did I come to marry Ron, if he's a useless as you're saying, why would I do that?"

"I wouldn't say useless, not specifically. He just isn't really in our league. He's just another guy off the street, moderately skilled, but nothing really to add to the mix. The help he did give us could have been found from any witch or wizard who grew up in the magical world. Hell, anyone half capable who has one magical grandparent could have told us the Tales of Beedle the Bard."

Which really is sad to think about; I spent seven years thinking of him as my best mate, and all he did was force me to carry him up a steep flight of stairs. It's not like I had an easy go of things myself. Just goes to show, it should have been Neville, Hermione, and I from the word go. We would have probably come up with a way to end the war in the Hangleton Graveyard.

Now isn't that a wry thought.

"And you're saying I married him anyway. That doesn't sound right. I would have noticed something like that myself, so why would I do it Harry?"

The look on my face would be described as doom-filled at worst, and hopelessly-bleak at best, had I got round to asking anyone to describe it. "Same reason I married Ginny 'the dead fish' Weasley; guilt. Guilt from what happened at Shell Cottage."

"Guilt? I got married out of guilt... Wait, dead fish? That's even more not right. She's only fourteen but even I've heard of what she gets up to with Michael Corner in all those broom closets."

"Ha. Hopefully I've done enough to fix that little personality flaw this time. But Michael Corner isn't even the tip of a monumentally huge iceberg. Her Carrows year aside; on the Hogwarts Express at the end of this year she produces one of those school legends, the likes of which I created when the Anglia was flown into the Whomping Willow.

Let's just say Dean Thomas and Seamus Finnegan got quite the mouthful once she lost a bet. In a fixed game of poker. Poker being a game she doesn't know how to play. Nor did she even bother to ask the rules of how to play it."

I think the look of distaste on my face must be quite strong because for the first time I've been in this room she cracks a small smile.

"Yeah, I marry the BC5000" I say turning green "Which is quite the accomplishment on her part saying as there are only 104 Broom Closets at Hogwarts, and she's somehow lain, still as a dead fish, in 5000 of them"

I break her, and she start's giggling "Do you know you're actually turning green." I do grin, a real smile of mirth for the first time at that particular bit of stupidity.

"So the upshot of the whole situation is; the three of us find ourselves locked in sexless marriages, with spouses who are way out of our league. We are eventually forced to deal with the rest of our lives being either criminally unsatisfying, or we buy a pet goat and resort to bestiality."

The brunette locks eyes with me, only I continue before she can cut in.

"So it started out as just being about sex, the three of us having fun and nothing more. But come on, I fell in love with the two most desirable woman on earth. How could I not?"

And it's true, I cannot imagine life without them, the two women in my life who are so different and in all ways just the same.

"Was the first time at Shell Cottage good?"

"The best; this morning was a close substitute for how good it can get."

Perfection in every sense.

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Lens of Sanity

Mr. Badkidoh, thank you for your review, from your profile picture I would like to give you a challenge. There is a reference somewhere in this story, a reference which you may be uniquely qualified to find. No-one else save you and I will get it, but drop a review when you find it saying you were successful, don't say what you found in the review though, it's funnier if only the two of us see it.

"...do people actually eat this stuff -real people, I mean, not dog people?" – Perspicacity

June 20th 1996: Number 12 Grimauld Place  
06:56 Sidereal Time

I wake with arms possessively encircling my companion, I would say things couldn't get better, but unfortunately we still have our clothes on. Still, it's an incredible feeling, I can count on one hand the number of times I've been allowed to actually sleep with this woman. I usually leap out of bed in the morning and get ready for the day, eager to get out and doing something. I've never really experienced the feeling of wanting to just lay here and waste the day away.

Inhaling a hinted memory of ink and parchment, I accidentally jostle awake my young friend. We both know the other is awake, but we are in such a comfortable position a feeling of rightness washes over us. It takes a long while before I scramble one handed grasping for a wand, I send off a Message Patronus.

The Aurors need to meet their new Director and I need show them that I know what I'm doing. So in the best traditions of making a good impression... I've told them I'm still recovering, and that I am setting up the meeting for tomorrow morning instead.

Nine o'clock sharp.

"So, are you up for a little mugglebaiting?" I say, the first words spoken since last night. We're showered and dressed, and I'm re-growing my hair looking in the mirror.

Incredulous she asks "Mugglebaiting?"

"Yeah, we need to spend some time quality with Petunia and the Wilkins' family"

Realisation dawning she just moves on. "How are you doing that?" she asks gesturing to my shortening and the lengthening hair.

"Stupid Pureblood custom, Head of the Family or Heir Apparent traditionally have to grow their hair out. The idea being that the

peasants can tell at a glance who their betters are. I actually like the formal robes, makes me think I'm kicking ass looking like a Jedi, but the hair grown out thing is annoying."

She was about to make a comment on the Jedi remark, but from the looks of things she decided to give up the whole thing as a bad job "Oh-Kay"

"It's the reason Neville has his hair long all the time, Sirius too, the wild hair was part of the reason he looked so deranged in all the wanted posters."

"Neville doesn't have long hair." She puts in.

My brows crease in thought "You're right, he didn't begin growing it out until he started leading the Army. I'll bet you anything that changes now though." I cast my mind about for a better example "Draco. Draco Malfoy, why do you think his hair has always been kept so long."

"Erm well, I always thought it's because he's a-"

"He isn't," I cut across "I asked his wife the same thing."

We get downstairs without meeting anyone bar Sirius, and he cheerfully forced into our hands some kind of boiled sausage, which I'm not entirely convinced can be counted as actual food. Deciding it's safer not to ask, I beg a hasty retreat and Side-Along Hermione to Little Whinging, Surry.

"I see you're point about the magical culture though. I should really read more about Pureblood customs, I'll bet there are ever so many books in the Black Library on the subject."

Walking down Privet Drive I make a suggestion "I can let you loose in my Library at Potter Place sometime. The stuff in there is more useful for what you're interested in compared to the stuff in the Black Library."

Her eyes glaze over for a moment, before she responds in an overly casual voice "So you have your own library Harry?"

"Oh look, we're here" I conjure a hundred rolls of toilet paper and begin throwing them over my Aunt and Uncle's House. Frustrated that I didn't answer her question my companion takes her time but eventually helps.

Possibly not the most mature way to express my dissatisfaction, this method of reprisal nevertheless amuses me. Especially as the toilet paper will keep randomly re-conjuring itself until the charm I put on it runs out. Especially, especially, because I'm doing it while in the attire traditionally worn by a member of the Aristocracy.

Done; I turn to my enraged Aunt, Vernon must be at work which is a shame, I hit her with a Babbling Hex, and stomping across her lawn violently remove my roses from her precious garden. The air-headed skank had the temerity to claim they were hers, despite all the hard work I put into growing the things.

I put a Stasis Field called a 'Keeping' around them, and do a portkey variant sending them to Grimmauld Place, then Side-Along to the next location.

If the best revenge is living well, then it follows that living well, and then covering the person's house in toilet paper is even better.

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"You said something about owning a library Harry?" This is the fourth time she's asked, and I am stonily refusing to show my amusement.

The Grangers were not home, nor were they at work. I've had to draw some of Hermione's blood to do a borderline 'Tracking' which is legal, if only technically. The problem with Dark Arts like this is that they are liable to have dodgy side effects if abused, causing nightmares and such. So with the information gleaned from her blood, we are now closing on a well put together little cottage, out in the middle of nowhere.

"Harry!"

"Okay fine..." I stick out my tongue "...Yes I do own a library, I'm actually going to buy Sirius' if he will let me. I'm sure you'll love it, it even has a book written by my closest Griffindor ancestor."

Visibly slobbering at the prospect she enquires "What is it called Harry, what's the title?" she is such a bibliophile sometimes. I don't even roll my eyes at her antics, I just hand it over, having had the foresight to fetch it for her last night from my family home.

Why I love killing people and taking their things  
by Helga Griffindor

She looks at me in stupefied astonishment "It's genuine." I assure her.

"But, but, the title?" the brunette stutters kind of lamely.

"You can't expect all a person's ancestors to be particularly nice people." I say pragmatically. As it happens my first response on finding that book was pretty much the same.

A short time later I reverse the transfiguration on Wendell and chuck him on the Divan, maybe it's more of a Settee, next to his wife. "Good morning Monica, how nice to see you this fine summer's day."

"Huh, Wha-, Hermione?" Honestly, not that quick on the uptake is he, maybe Hermione is adopted.

"Hello mummy, daddy. How are things?" This is a farcical statement if you could see the situation her two parents are in. I'd prefer not to describe it, but safe to say the 'Aguamenti' we whispered a few seconds ago helped in more ways than just waking them.

"Wendell please, take all the time you need, no need to splutter. If you take your time to think about what you want to say, and then say it, it comes out much clearer to the audience."

"I think you are confusing us with someone else young man..." The 'lady' is the first to recover "...I am sure I do not know any Wendell, nor any Monica."

"Not yet you don't." Oh-Kay, combined with the smile that was downright chilling. I'll have to remind myself not to piss off Hermione. Like ever.



"Obliviate" Honestly, who cares what these people have to say, I sure as fuck don't.

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She's bouncing, literally bouncing with happiness. The quiet bookish young woman pulled me into a full on pornographic kiss after we left the cottage, and now she's all but dancing down this dirt road.

I think I'll walk for a while before Apparating us out of here.

I'm forcibly reminded that this is not the bookish, scholastic innocent I once assumed she was. No, this is little miss 'let's start an illicit vigilante organisation,' and 'what's so bad about permanently disfiguring one of my classmates using jinxed parchment.' She is, and always has been, a dangerous, if brilliant young woman.

Her attention snaps to me "You distracted me from my original question."

I am not frightened of Hermione. She is not going to do something terrible to me for doing something I don't remember sometime in the past.

She's not?

I mean... No, she's not!

"I-I distracted you?" Damn it Potter you stuttered.

"I asked you about your hair." Oh thank the gods. I shorten and lengthen my hair a few times and give her a Lockhart smile which makes her chuckle.

"Teddy, that is my eldest godson by the way, he mentioned once how I never need to shave or go for a haircut..." last time was when I was seven, strange that I never noticed it until I was in my thirties "...It turns out I'm a metamorphmagus similar to Tonks."

"You're a metamorphmagus?" She blurts out surprised

"Just a little, it's not full blown like Teddy hoped, but he said that you can get the trait at different levels. Narcissa Malfoy can change her

hair, and eye colour, in addition to altering the length of her nails. I can only do the length of my hair but it's still pretty cool.

I grew it back after Albus scorched most of it off with that Sphere of Midnight, and I can keep it short unless I'm doing something official. I don't particularly like it long, but its best I go the whole hog with that Pureblood crap until people are used to me, and once they are I can just go back to normal."

We talk for a while longer our moods in high spirits, I tell her about the movie loosely based on my life, and my theme music written by John Williams. As I finish the story about Fleur's aunt Jacqueline, she realises we have no destination and I crack us back to Grimmauld Place.

Quite a fun little morning all in all, playing hooky from work is what this game is all about.

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"One of these days I'm gonna snap, go dark, and kill you all. You realize that, right?" – nonjon

June 20th 1996: Hogwarts, Room of Requirement  
23:04 Sidereal Time

I like to think I'm a Charm's Master.

I'm not though, the Masters Guild are always a bit shirty about awarding a Mastery to anyone who has not gone through an Apprenticeship with a current member of the Guild. This is not just in Charms, but goes for all disciplines; Transfiguration, Potions and so forth.

I still think that my abilities in Charms are up there with the people who actually have a Mastery, but then my thoughts may just be fancy, as I've never had my greatest accomplishment tested. Nor have I ever shown anyone what it can do.

Some people suspect I'm doing something, and Hermione is even correct in some of her assumptions, but no-one knows the full extent.

Therein rests the power.

When I was twenty four years old I finally got sick of glasses. They're annoying as hell and constantly fall off at the worst possible moments, so I purchased a set of contact lenses. You can't do this in the magical community because witches and wizards as a whole seem to find sticking shards of glass in their eyes the kind of thing which makes them queasy.

So I got them from an optometrist in London.

Now where am I going with this you might ask. Well it is a long standing tradition that 'appropriately cautious' people, such as Alastor Moody and Amelia Bones, have spelled visual devices which can see through Invisibility Cloaks. Mad-Eye has his distinctive eye, Madame Bones has that monocle, and even Dumbledore had a pair of glasses which did that.

I say 'had' and not 'has' because his glasses were spelled using the Elder Wand to be able to see through my Cloak of Invisibility. Which is stealing by the way, nothing can see through that Cloak and he added the Charm without asking. Stealing is bad, and I destroyed the glasses after our little showdown.

Now that I think on it, I'll bet he added the charm to Mad-Eye's eye as well. I'm going to have to do something about that now Moody is alive again. I hope I won't have to hurt him, I liked Moody.

Anyway that is neither here nor there. I bought my contact lenses when I was twenty four, and added the charm to see through Invisibility Cloaks using my Holly Wand. While I was at it I added a bunch of other spells which were pretty easy to find; Vision Correction which was better than the prescription, Scratch Resistance, and an Impervious Charm.

I found that no matter what I did, I could not add more than four spells to my contact lenses. Not a problem, as all I really wanted was to be able to see invisible people. I'm an Auror remember, people do attempt to sneak up on me on occasion.

I smile sardonically to myself at that particular understatement.

After a few months I decided that I really wanted to add a couple more spells to my contacts, so I did some research and found that

the reason I couldn't add more, was that they are so small, only a few grams, and that I could only add more magic to them if they had more mass.

Which means that spelled glasses would be so much better for my purposes.

Not to be out done I tried to find a work around.

It turns out you can add extra spells, all you need is a ward stone. Sort of a carved block of something solid with loads of runes and things on it; precious stones, dragon bone, that type of thing, you could even use Unicorn Horn if you're a total bastard. You link the ward stone to the magical device and you can add as much magic as you please.

I briefly considered using my watch, I used to carry it everywhere so it's not like it would matter. But eventually I decided against it because all it would take for the spells to stop working would be for me to become separated from my watch.

Then invisible people would inevitably kill me.

I am against invisible people killing me on principle.

Not to give up my quest to add more magic to my contacts I did yet more research, eventually coming up with yet another work around to my four spells problem. If I cast one spell, and that one spell has the same effect as four spells, then all the magic will hold.

There is a high level charms theory known as Entanglement, whereby you strip down two spells using Rune Diagrams and Arithmancy, and finagle a way to produce exactly the same effect using one spell, not two. The one meta-spell is far more difficult to cast, and far more magic intensive than the two spells taken individually. It is a step from there to combine four spells into one spell.

You can see the obvious problem; the level of complexity increases dramatically for each spell you add. Nevertheless that's just what I did.

I worked out how to combine my original four into one, then took the new spells I wanted to use, and worked out how to Entangle those in the same way. It took days of work spell-crafting, and the casting itself took a full three minutes.

So I added my dozen extra charms to my Contact Lenses, which are now capitalised as they have become far more important.

This was when I was twenty four.

When I was twenty nine I found an Enchantment I wanted to use; a Tactical Map or TacMap.

I stole the idea from one of James' video games when he was like six or something. It seemed it could be really useful, so I adapted what the Normals use to work by magic, and set about adding it to my Contact Lenses.

Now as I said, this was not just a Charm but a full blown Enchantment once I worked out how to do it. The difference between Charms and Enchantments is analogous to the difference between Transfiguration and Conjuring; you're not turning something into something else, you're turning Nothing into Something.

Both Conjuring and Enchanting are an order of magnitude more difficult, and more power intensive than their lesser cousins. So when it came to the Entangling process, this too was far more challenging.

Given that I'd been adding a charm here and there once every few months, the casting time was becoming ridiculous once I finished adding the TacMap. Yet I had all my research notes, and by this time I was becoming quite accomplished at my charms, so even though I had to strip all the magic from them each time, it wasn't as onerous as it might have been.

I stated earlier that I began adding to the contacts when I was twenty four. I was well into my forties before I ran out of ideas.

I have quite the collection of Charms, and more than a few Enchantments on the current version of Contact Lenses. I guess I should come up with a cool name or something, but as I've never

told anyone of my extensive modifications, there doesn't seem to be much point.

I think of it as my Tactical Display.

A brief list would include magical variants of; TacMap, motion activated Proximity Radar, FoF Tags linked to recognisable and none recognised magical cores, Intelligent Hazard Assessment, incoming object Tracking, Playback, Targeting, numerous uploadable NavMarkers, Command Inventory which follows primary, secondary and backup wands, as well as stocked potions, and tracking everything else I'm carrying and where I'm carrying it, while also keeping mission parameters in order, oh, and a Clock.

Now a clock may not seem like such a big deal, but I regularly use a Time-Turner, so I had to come up with a way for it to stay abreast of the actual time, as well as the time of my past self or selves. This was not easy I can tell you. Getting the clock to work was harder than enchanting enough intelligence into the thing so it could recognise likely hazards.

Hell there's more, not only can I see everything that's invisible like I originally planned on, but I worked out how to see through my Hallow just like the Demon Headmaster. A compass, ability track likely dark artefacts, and see invisible people is one thing, but taken together the magic on my Contact Lenses makes me one of the most difficult people to sneak up on in all of human history.

I even have a reputation for thoughtfulness as my FoF, Friend or Foe, Tags remember people. So if I've met you once I'll always know your name, and can pull up a brief description of any relevant information. I once caught an assassin Polyjuiced to look like one of my assistants, because my Display didn't recognise her magical core.

Wearing them makes me feel like a god, Bwahahahahahahaha!

Man I'd make an awesome Dark Lord.

Maybe one day.

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Which is why I'm in the Room of Requirement, a place destroyed long ago in a massive blast of Unrestrained Fiendfyre. You can't say I've not come by my terror of Fiendfyre honestly... and man do I hate Boggarts.

There are no Boggarts here, nor is anyone shooting Fiendfyre at you, stop being a poncey bitch.

Anyway, I stop myself shuddering, the reason I'm here is because after I got a promise from Hermione to apologise to everyone for being less than in my right mind while under the effects of healing potion, I went to rebuild my greatest accomplishment.

Not only did I have to Confound the Normals a second time, I had to pay an extortionate amount of cash a second time as well. But I got the raw contacts, so it was worth it.

Using a Time-Turner you can work with 30 hour days, but I'd used all six extra hours last night, and my personal timeline hasn't recovered from being stretched out yet. If you use the things as often as I do, you get a feel for how much they can manage, and I know that at noon when I parted from Hermione, I could have span back three hours and ten minutes, had the Time-Turner been capable of doing lesser increments than sixty minutes.

Get a pencil if you need to work it out for yourself, otherwise just trust me.

So I span back three hours to about half-eight in the morning and travelled to Hogwarts. Wait! That's not right, I missed a day. Fuck, I forgot I slept away most of the day I duelled Dumbledore. I could have spun back all six... Aarg, I hate not having my Tactical Display, it always reminds me of stuff like this.

That settles it, once I'm finished here, I'm getting drunk. I don't care what craziness happens that I'll have to deal with when I wake up, it'll be worth it!

So I've been here in the Room of Requirement, as it is a very secure location, for the last fourteen hours. I have a four different potions strapped to my head in the fashion of those boorish Yanks watching that boring-ass sport of theirs baseball, what's it called? A 'beer helmet' or some such thing.

Invigoration Draught, Pepper-Up, and Wit-Sharpening. As well as an incredibly addictive potion that keeps ones hands from shaking, which I'm not going to touch for the next twelve months because of just how dangerous it is.

All of this is needed to hold my focus, and boost my level of concentration to that required for constructing the object.

The sheer amount of magic that must be cast to get my Contact Lenses is phenomenal, and it takes almost fourteen hours of continuous casting for it to count as one spell. I can't do it without the Elder Wand, and I need to use a second wand just to 'hold' some of it in place while I do others.

I had memorised the entire process before travelling back in time. It took a highly illegal Memory Potion but it was worth it, because what I've just completed is flawless. You can probably guess why I think I'm a Charms Master, this thing is my life's work.

You can't have expected me to wax poetic about something as commonplace as a mere magically expanded trunk could you?

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"Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, remember? ...I didn't get the job by collecting stamps." – Shezza

June 21st 1996: Ministry of Magic, Level 2, Department of Magical Law Enforcement  
10:15 Sidereal Time

Hangover Remedies are awesome.

Look at me all bright eyed and bushy tailed following the consumption of a whole brewery's worth of firewhiskey, courtesy of my good friend Aberforth Dumbledore. I didn't even have to pay, it was a thank you for causing public humiliation to his brother by reading out the Chocolate Frog Card.

He was apathetic toward the arse kicking I gave the man, but he thought the crack about Snape was as funny as I did.



I woke up covered in a thick layer of mud, with a magically binding contract, signed in my blood, requiring I teach a semester at Durmstrang Institute for Magical Learning. Luckily it doesn't specify when I have to do it, nor what class I'm obliged to teach, so I'm counting it as a win.

"Roberts if you don't like it I can always transfer you to cleaning toilets with a fucking toothbrush."

The magic on my Contact Lenses is, like all magic, based on intent. What this means is that I can interface with all the various commands with little more than a thought, opening the menus for instance, simply by thinking about it.

"Jenkins, this idiot is annoying the shit out of me, you have the lead on Blue Team. Ignore everything Roberts says and you'll be fine."

Unfortunately when using them for the first time, they are not set up in my preferred way. It tends to take a short amount of 'shakedown' time to get them functioning at their best. In this circumstance however, I am faced with a very immediate problem; the intent required to activate the assorted functions is set far, far too sensitively.

"No, I don't care that he's just out the Academy ...Have the rest of you been following the briefing? Thorfinn Rowle is not one of the pansy shoplifters you jokers have been arresting under Fudge's administration."

Because of the over sensitivity all the Command Menus are opening and closing constantly, whenever they so much as cross my mind. I was given a huge urgent warning that there is a 12 percent likelihood my coffee will not have the appropriate level of sugar in it. And Kingsley's FoF Tag is stuck being labelled as 'Samuel L. Jackson' and try as I might, I can't work out how to change it.

"Thorfinn Rowle; Big, Blonde, Norse. This ringing any bells? Have any of you been listening to a fucking thing I've been saying?"

And, not that I'm complaining overmuch, but I am being treated to a zoomed in view of Dora Tonks' chest jiggling as she entered the room. There is a small caption in the top right of my Display, and it's playing over and over and over again in super slow motion.

"Get your shit wired, the portkeys will be leaving at 10:30am, and anyone who is left behind is gonna be working nights until they're old and grey."

Taken together this is eminently distracting set of circumstances, especially as I am attempting to instil a competent and imposing impression in my new Aurors.

"Move out. And Roberts, guess who has the honour of carrying my two Sappers."

Maybe I should go find a dark room somewhere, and just curl up into a ball until this is all over.

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Roberts exhaustedly drops the two unwieldy stone blocks. Sappers are just massive ward stones with badly carved runes on them, they're used to ground a magical field, making it easier to break through any flaws in a warding.

The method I'm using to get through them is the kind of cheating because only people with ridiculous magical reserves can use it, the smaller version of it is mostly used just to sound out possible fault lines, and I learned it from two guys called Holmes and Fitz-Willis when they did the old ministry annex.

Breaking wards in this way is one of those Dark Lord key skills, because without it, all your victims simply run and hide, all the while laughing at how you are incapable of doing their families any real harm.

You walk into the interview and they say 'well good morning Mr. Aspheart, going for the snake motif I see, always a popular choice these days. Leads to my first question, is it an anagram ...it is? Wonderful.

Second question, do you know ward breaking? The Harmonic Method, really? Well that is impressive I must say, so few of the hopefuls nowadays think to learn such an important skill.

Okay, final question, do your armies of terror wear face concealing uniforms ...they don't? ...you think face concealing uniforms are stupid? ...Well, that is disappointing. Is there any way I might convince you otherwise? ...There is not, such a shame.

I'm afraid your attitude is just not in line with our organisations core values.

And so, I regret to inform you that I do not believe there is an opportunity for you at this time, we will keep your details on file in case we need to get back to you. Perhaps we will find a position for you in dispatch.'

Okay, so maybe I'm being a little silly here, but how does one become a Dark Lord anyway? It doesn't really matter, there is probably a questionnaire you have to fill in or something, but I'm getting sidetracked.

So the Harmonic Method of Wardbreaking is only available to people with huge stores of power. I think of area wards like a knot, despite the fact that there is no one place where it is tangled, instead the knot covers the whole area.

All the different wardings are stacked incredibly close together, and wrapped around one another. I use two Sappers to separate them, just a little bit, in between both stones. I then change the, frequency I guess, of the magic I'm pouring into the ward, until I feel a kind of resonance. Then I pull the weakest layer away.

As I say, this is cheating.

Whenever professional Curse Breakers meet someone who can do it, they get all rabid and hateful.

This is because what would take professionals say, three hours, takes a Harmonic Wardbreaker about five minutes. One of the top guys in their Guild is a man called Joshua Carpenter, and he once took a swing at me for my 'stuck up' attitude, which I for one think is totally unfair.

The protections around Mr. Rowle's home are down, and my teams swarm in.

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I send off the bright blue bolt of light I learned from Luna, and the battle is over. It looks like a clear cobalt version of a simple stunner to an untrained eye, but it actually overloads the targets central nervous system.

Yeah, Luna is scary sometimes.

It wasn't too much of a battle really, in truth I don't have to fight any Death Eaters as part of the plan to kill Voldemort, I'm just doing this Operation as a 'shakedown' exercise for the Aurors, because teams, like Contact Lenses, need a little time to get working effectively. Actually getting into a bit of a dust up with the guys will do more for their accepting of my authority than pretty much anything I can think of too.

Thorfinn Rowle may or may not be one of the Inner Circle, I'm not sure. He probably is now, saying as all the other Inner Circle members were participants in the Department of Mysteries Battle, and as such are in prison. I set up an attack on his house because I know it was being used for training by the younger recruits early on in the war, and hopefully we'd pick up a few extra prisoners.

When Jenkins and his team blasted in the back door, that idiot Roberts didn't look like he was even part of the same crew. That kind of attitude is going to get some people killed if he's not careful. To think, the guy used to be my boss back in the day. Always was one of those wannabe politician types.

Here I am criticising lack of team cohesion when I basically never work with in groups. Gods I love hypocrisy. Honestly, I just don't see the point, for whatever reason, I'm just far too powerful when compared to the average Auror, and working with other people basically just slows me down.

As far as I can tell people aren't born appreciably more or less magically powerful than one another. Like height, some individuals are a few inches taller, or a few inches shorter than each other, but for the most part people are average height. You don't get people walking around who are twenty feet tall.

Unless you're Hagrid, but he has a good excuse.

Except, there are people like Neville and I, who can quite conceivably take on ten guys on our own. This is not normal, but there is a fairly simple explanation; training and circumstance.

I carried around a Soul Fragment for sixteen years, and my innate magic was fighting off its possession the whole time. This actually happened as recently as the Department of Mysteries Battle, when I sort of used a little too much magic chasing off Voldemort, and the thing took a crack at possessing me all out.

So when it was removed, following the climax of my 'Death March' at age seventeen, I could take all that big beefy power which was going to waste fighting possession, and use it in my normal spell-casting.

Similarly, Neville's magic had created a massively inefficient workaround of his neural damage, so that when the damage was repaired he had power to spare. Dunno how Tom or Albus did it, though it was probably some kind of Dark Ritual in Tom's case, and maybe Albus ate his sister or something.

The upshot of this being, the only time I ever bother pairing with a wand-mate, is when I'm fighting with Neville. Like that time during the Chinese Olympics, the two of us working together are downright unstoppable.

So when I'm on an Operation with my Aurors like today, my strategy is basically to send off the teams, and sit back monitoring with the aid of my Display. When any team looks like they're in trouble I mosey on over, and help them out.

Sort of freelancing my way through the fights.

Other than one Wide-Area Energy Ribbon, and Luna's 'Stunner,' I didn't really have all that much to do with the capture of our twenty shiny new prisoners.

Vanishing Mr. Rowle's pelvis, I tell the guys I'm quitting for the day, and to link up with Kingsley 'don't-tell-me-I-look-like-Samuel-L-Jackson' Shacklebolt if they get board.

I love my job.

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"I think they saw too many Muggle cartoons..." – dobbyelflord

June 21st 1996: Ministry of Magic, Elevator  
13:20 Sidereal Time

I really need to hire my assistants.

I was given an idea by Hermione a long time ago when she taught my something called the 'Pareto Principle.' Basically it means that only a fifth of the work you actually do is important, the rest of it is stuff you should hack off on subordinates, or just ignore entirely.

So my grasp of this situation widened perceptibly with this new information, and I came to an interesting conclusion. If I figure out what the really important stuff of that last fifth actually is, and then focus all my energy on that, I can hack off eighty percent of that last fifth. Leading to my realisation that I only really need to do four percent of my job.

Everything else can be given to my assistants.

That's plural by the way, I always hire two. And they can't be morons, they must be very intelligent, and very capable young women. Well, they're not always women, I had a guy who could do the job beautifully, I don't care what they look like, all I care about is that they are good at what they do.

They have to be overly capable because my assistants, effectively run British Wizarding Law, and are responsible for preventing mass bouts of anarchy. Which unfortunately seems to be a state of affairs that, witches and wizards on the whole, really want to be in, if not watched closely enough.

They are like four year olds in that.

Hiring the kinds of people who can do my job for me is actually quite expensive. I am forced to supplement their income out of my own pocket, as my budget really doesn't stretch all that far when it comes right down to it. The budget which covers my salary is already being paid to me. So when I attempt to get a budget enhancement to pay

for an assistant, whoever is holding the Minister's Office at the time, always ask why they should pay me twice to do only one job.

I can never really come up with a good answer to justify it.

Saying as I force my assistants to do most of the heavy lifting, I need to give them pay which is completely over the top. And so, as I have said, I am required to supplement their cheques myself. It is for this reason that I am actually one of the lowest paid individuals hired by the Ministry of Magic.

Not that it really matters, I'm loaded, and I'm only doing the job because it's fun.

And so with the aid of my aides, I can attempt to catch AIDS. Okay, that really wasn't funny. Besides the potion that cures it costs only four Sickles. And neither Hermione, Fleur, nor I would ever find ourselves in that position anyway.

My mind drifts briefly at the thought of Fleur in an assortment of different positions, so I miss the woman entering the elevator.

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"You should have been beneath a Dome of Silence Mr. Potter. The custom security charm was interesting, but I'm a journalist, getting past these things is my business."

"Ever the astute observer of human interaction Francine." Her mouth curls in distaste at the mention of her first name.

"Quite the story, wouldn't you say. Even more so than your recent altercation with Mr. Dumbledore." Annoying bug-lady can't leave well enough alone, and her glasses are ugly. I don't bother responding, and she takes this as a suggestion to continue. "Just think, I could get a book out for something like this, 'Harry Potter: Time Hero,' or something to that effect."

"Barron Greengrass strangled you to death in your own home." I interject. "I'm going to have to ask you to sign a Secrecy Scroll."

Informing her as to her grizzly murder does not leave the journalist wrong footed for long. But I interrupt before she can respond. "I

know a mistress isn't a wife, but he was still displeased that you cheated on him." I exit the lift and go in search of a Secrecy Scroll. "Informing you of this could be constituted a Life Debt you know. Should you take measures to prevent it I mean."

That is probably a load of rubbish. I can only get through so much by bullshitting my way through everything, sooner or later someone is going to call me on it. Yet I hope this works, Rita Skeeter is annoying as hell, and I really don't want the world at large thinking I'm a time traveller.

Openly at least, I don't give a crap if there are rumours.

I've got her just off balance enough to keep her from an irritating little rebellion. We haggle for a long while, and after offering an unnecessarily huge bribe, I end up agreeing to an interview regarding her upcoming book about Albus Dumbledore.

It slipped my mind to mention that I'd have likely talked about him anyway.

I don't particularly like Dumbledore.

She signs the Secrecy Scroll.

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I'm taking the rest of the afternoon off. I have been working extraordinarily hard lately, and I've decided that I'm going to take it off regardless of what anyone else says about it. If there is some kind of world ending emergency, they'll just have to deal with it without one Harry-James-Potter.

Oh hell, I've begun hyphenating my own name. Not a good sign.

You may think it strange that I go to tremendous effort to become First Enforcer again, and then admit to barely ever showing up at my job. Thing is, to set up the situation where I only really need to do between four and twenty hours work per week, takes considerable skill.

You have to know exactly what's important, and what's not important. And to do this you need to be very good at your job. Which I am. I



just don't really like doing the day to day stuff normal Aurors have to do. The normal stuff involves standing around for a ten hour shift in sleet. And it's always February. I don't know how it can possibly always be February, given that it's the shortest month, but it is. Always.

So I set up the situation where most of the boring work gets done by other people, and basically never bother showing up. And despite stupid jokes from earlier, I do not spend all or my time... socialising, with Fleur and Hermione.

So what do I do with myself you ask.

Simple, everything.

I spend enormous amounts of time and energy coming up with ways to distract myself. I keep losing bets for a start. Min scammed me into teaching Defence for a year at Hogwarts. Wasn't really all that bad, for one thing, with me as Defence Professor, I could be fairly confident that the years Defence Professor wouldn't try to kill me.

This was two years before Teddy stated at Hogwarts, and I took the opportunity to Exorcise Binns. That damned ghost ruins History for everyone, and history, wizard history, is fascinating. Olympe scammed me into teaching half a semester of Charms at Beauxbatons a few years later.

But you don't really want to hear the rundown of my whole awesome life.

One thing which is important however, is the aftermath of the Chinese Olympic Games in 2008. I got a new job, and not one working with those pricks over at the International Federation of Warlocks. No, I got a job working with the, totally not pricks, of the International Confederation of Wizards.

The two organisations are completely different.

Completely.

So I became a Freelancer, working for the department which is euphemistically referred to as 'Dispatch.'

I think of myself as a Freelancer, but the job has hundreds of names, and nobody cares what you call yourself because it's a job you get on merit. You are not even allowed to use your own name.

I chose: Tom Jerry Aspheart.

Which is an anagram I came up with in the summer preceding third year, when I was staying in Diagon Alley, being used as bait to lure out notorious mass murderer Sirius Black, and thinking on what the Riddle Diary had shown me during my annual scholastic suicide attempt. It really is a shame that I don't speak Parsel anymore, the snake motif thing would have been awesome.

So I'm a Freelancer, but the job has a bunch of other names; Bounty Hunter, Independent Hit-Wizard, Murderous Psychopath, Hired Wand, Soldier of Fortune, and Mercenary to name a few.

The ones who call themselves 'Soldier of Fortune' are nasty pieces of work, they're the kind that always choose the former when asked to bring in a target Dead or Alive.

The other thing that all Independents have in common, is they all think they're Boba Fett from Star Wars. All of them do. This is also the reason why that jagged purple pain causing curse I used on Snape is so popular; everyone calls it Force Lightning.

Though I came up with a variant in red which I named 'Fawkes Lightning,' for no other reason than to annoy my evil Phoenix, he doesn't like having a pain causing curse named after him.

Sucks to be you Fawkes.

Anyway, the reason why this is interesting is because I had a contract to track down this Russian who had done, something, something bad, I can't actually remember what so it must not be that important. And another Independent, one who I'd known of by reputation for years, had a contract running at the same time. The mysteriously named Raven. Who was one of those 'Soldier of Fortune' types, distinctive in that she had jet black hair, and idiosyncratic jade coloured eyes.

We got into a tussle, and it turned out to be Hermione.

Small world.

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"...and he said that was why it was important to have more than one plot going at a time" – Less Wrong

June 21st 1996: Hogwarts, Room of Requirement  
14:41 Sidereal Time

I have seemingly forgotten to tell everyone what a great guy Perce is. I really, honestly to goodness, meant to mention this during the Headmaster's Office briefing, but it must have slipped my mind.

Seriously, have I become over-reliant on technology or what?

This is the reason why the meeting I arranged was so confusing and uncomfortable for the first hour.

Molly, George, and the newly resurrected Fred, were all standing in one corner, and Perce was in another. You could tell he was in such a prickly mood by his overly formal attitude. Overly formal for him I mean, he relies on procedure when in bad situations, in the same way as I rely on doing crazy, impossible shit when cornered.

Please don't get me wrong. I don't mean this is in anyway a bad thing, we are all different, and Perce is one of my closest friends, along with Molly. You only need to understand the context.

With Molly it's all about talking to the twenty year old girl, the one who won her last championship, and then, for whatever outlandish reason, decided to give it all up in 1970 to raise her firstborn son.

With Hermione, you've got to realise her little flaw. She's not evil, it's just that she has a bit of trouble telling the difference between turning a person's hair green for a joke, and killing their dog. It is because of this little problem that she always follows the rules strictly, so as to never be caught out.

With Luna you just have to accept the universe exactly the way it is, and then talk directly to her, without hinting, or relying on the little subtleties.

Neville I have no idea about. I get the impression that he has a read on me though, and he accepts whatever personality quirks I happen to regularly express without remarking on them.

Fleur, Fawkes, and Astoria are all like that too. You can't really deal with them until you get the lowdown on each one's personality.

So I'm forced to throw out yet another story in order to help the people in my life understand what is really going on. "Okay you lot, we need to have a reckoning, Perce Weasley is awesome. By far the most awesome Weasley I know. I've known him for who he really is since the Hogwarts Battle, and I've worked with him for years. He is the coolest Weasley brother, the brother you should all be looking up to. Perce is the godfather to Al, Lily, and Louis, three of my most competent progeny, and as such, should be treated with respect."

This is not what they were expecting. They were all aiming for an injured family member, lamely attempting to scramble for the scraps left behind by a noble and forgiving family. Unfortunately for them, that fantasy is in no way anchored in reality.

"The Perce Weasley I know is the Head of International Magical Cooperation, his wife is Minister of Magic, and he has basically no reason to follow the law set down for us lesser mortals.

He is widely known for his torturing of new, enthusiastic, and 'up-and-coming' ministry employees. Whenever one of those types manages to wrangle a position, the guy torments them using a report on cauldron bottom thickness.

A report he actually wrote, in all seriousness, when he was an enthusiastic, and 'up-and-coming' ministry employee himself.

So the poor bastards do a shit load of research, then compile a detailed presentation to the Department Head's, involving the danger of horrendously perilous cauldron bottoms, and none of them ever seem to notice the guy is only doing it to mess with the newbies."

It's not surprising that he can get away with it though. He has this officious, commanding appearance, which prevents most people from thinking too much beyond the obvious. This presence is the

reason why he can pull off the kinds of pranks which the twins would find themselves slobbering over, with unfettered desire, and a hope for nothing more than to be involved in them.

As I say, Perce knows what he's doing, don't get in his way.

Unless you're a big fan of pain.

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"So the incantation is 'Frango ós,' and you draw kind of a triangle with a hooking motion at the end." I demonstrate as a writhing yellow beam jets from the end of my wand, smashing a training dummy to kindling.

Everyone has calmed down, and I've commandeered the Come and Go Room again. I just can't get over how useful this place is. I am, or more accurately Molly and I, are teaching the room a nice long spell-chain.

"And the hooking motion leads into a kind of flip, then a diagonal slash..." I demonstrate "...and the incantation is 'Conseco Artus'" A bright blue ribbon erupts, slicing another dummy in two.

This is what the other Molly used to defeat Bellatrix LeStrange, and it took us two days in my Pensieve trying to figure out what she did. It was all on-the-fly at the time apparently.

"Simple Bone Shatter and Limb Sever. Fun for the whole family."

It was called The Prewett Chain by Witch Duellist once she submitted it for the article, and is actually made up of the Lesser; thirteen-spells, and the Greater; thirty-one-spells. Although we had to swap out the two Killing Curses in the Greater, for a Spanish variant Piercing Jinx that had the same beginning and ending motions.

"Think of it like drawing a Rune in midair with your wand. That's all wands are anyway, a portable means to draw runes."

I enthusiastically use 'Abolesco,' the medical Bone Vanishing spell, in place of the Killing Curse for the same reason; the beginning and ending motions are the same.

"And Precision Casting is important..." Sirius nods along with this, it turns out he used to teach Duelling to some of the Aurors before the stay at Azkaban. His family, evil though they may have been, had given him the best instructors when he was a child. "...Just ask Sirius how much more powerful you can get your spells if regularly you practice Flawless Casting."

They all get into it, and I spend some time going from one person to another helping out. Fawkes and Hedwig are both here pretending not to be sizing one another up, and I take the opportunity to ask Dobby how he was able to Side-Along wizards through wards. He doesn't know how but he tells me it's just something he's always been able to do. Oh well, another mystery for another day, that one has been bugging the crap out of Hermione for years, ever since Kreacher told her it was impossible.

I'm actually having a great time, all of these people are dead, yet I get to kick back and play with magic all afternoon in there company.

I'll set up the fight with Voldemort soon, but for now it's really just nice to hang out and relax.

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I am not concerned. I mean, yeah. Hermione is walking toward me wearing one of her hollow-point smiles, but she doesn't scare me, she's just a little girl.

"Hi?" We've had quite a long, full day, and we were about to head home.

"Hello Harry." Whatever it is can't be that bad can it?

"..."

"I have a question." She eventually states.

"...O-Kay. Shoot."

"You keep going on about this incredible Plan you're following, I was wondering if you could tell me how you came up with it, or what it

involves. You seem to have just been slobbering around a lot, and not really following any kind of plan."

She's losing faith in the awesome plan, well that is a legitimate concern I guess.

Exiting the Room of Requirement I crack us through the wards of Hogwarts without her noticing it's impossible.

"I didn't. I never come up with plans, planning is just not one of my skills. The Ministry people have a saying; 'the plan is Harry Potter guaranteed,' which is kind of insulting because what it means in context is; guaranteed to fuck up."

She really doesn't like this confession as we enter Number 12 Grimmauld Place side by side.

"I once broke into Gringotts using a Harry Potter plan; we Polyjuiced you into looking like Bellatrix, and I was under my Cloak of Invisibility. The plan was to trick the Goblins into thinking you were her, and use her scary reputation to get us into the LeStrange Vault without too many questions being asked.

The wheels started coming off before we even got to the building. The plan was to get in there somehow, find an object somewhere in the massive pile of gold somehow, then escape somehow.

That's not a plan.

That's a, let's just wing it and hope for the best, seat of your pants thing.

I think my lack of being able to come up with plans has something to do with my innate ability to actually just wing it, and pull off crazy stuff anyway. In the Gringotts break in we eventually stole one of their Dragons and almost broke the Statute of Secrecy."

"Okay. But you said that you had a plan, was that just a lie?"  
Heading up the stairs I continue.

"No, no. I do have an awesome plan. I just wasn't the one who came up with it. I helped, made a bunch of suggestions and so forth, but I

had a team of people come up with every eventuality they could think of.

I do this as Director as well, make sure I have a command team to come up with the plans, delegate most of the long term strategising, and simply focus on making those strategies work when the wheels inevitably come off."

The brunette frowns in thought and I keep on going.

"We spent the last eight months in a Pensieve reviewing everything we could think of from eye-witness memories. I'm fully prepared should the world declare me a Dark Lord, Voldemort learns of us targeting the Horcruxes, Dumbledore turns out to be puppy-murderingly evil, or any of a thousand eventualities the command team came up with.

They made me memorise everything before I left, and promise not to kill people because that sends the wrong impression. They even made me learn Fiendfyre, which I will never, ever, not in a million years cast, but they made me learn it in case I needed a wanded way of destroying the Horcruxes.

If we get to August 1st and Voldemort is still gracing the world with his presence, I'm to get the Independents involved. If we get to September 1st I need to have a meeting with Elizabeth Windsor, Defender of the Faith, Queen of England."

The young woman realises where we are, and I'm offered a look I burned a world for.

The door swings shut.

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"The price was too high" – Deadwoodpecker

August 31st 2038: Depths of the Magnus Fontis, Rome  
Mission Clock 514:55, 23:55 Off-Sidereal Time

"This is such a stupid idea." This has to be the millionth time I've stated this one, irrefutable truth.



"You agreed, now suck it up and do it." I lever myself back to my feet and point the stump of my right arm in her direction.

"This is such a stupid idea. There has to be a way around it. I'm not doing it." Still smells, that never stops bugging me. I fucking hate Fiendfyre. The wounds never heal, and they never stop smelling of charred and burnt flesh.

"You've heard what they're all saying, Doo-"

"If I hear the word Doom one more time I swear to gods I'm going to scream." I suppose a Fiendfyre wound could be worse. Virtually nobody has ever survived a kiss with the stuff. Being Master of Death sure does have some perks, pity I lost the Elder Wand at the same time as the arm though.

"You agreed, you're doing it. It's four minutes to midnight, and you're doing it." Why didn't I just cut the burnt flesh away? That would have solved the smell problem.

"You expect me to kill my whole family. That's what you're asking me to do, you want me to kill my whole, entire family." What's left of this once great Library is pathetic, clearing it out of those idiots was a breeze, but it's a shame more of the books didn't survive.

"We don't know that for sure. This universe will probably survive."

"Yes, you said, but you don't know for sure. And even if it does, I'm basically leaving you all here alone. You expect me to leave that..." I gesture to the auburn haired woman's distended belly "...that alone, to be killed anyway."

"Shut up Harry. You know you're going to do it, just shut up, and get on with it. It will be fine, you can stop this from ever happening." She's gesturing at the room, this place used to be as immaculate as it was impressive. "I even got you earlier like you asked. That was not easy I assure you."

"You also said you would come up with a different way. This is such a stupid idea." This is such a stupid idea, it really, really is.

"Do it Harry. Stop it from happening." The kid knows he is going to die.

"You're only eighteen. You know that, so you are too young to vote in favour of your death." He just meets my gaze and tries to stare me down.

I take in the rest of the room, the woman with a light brushing of gray has a determined look on her still youthful face, silky auburn has a deadened mask, and black as pitch is still staring me down.

They all, everyone, want this to happen.

This is such a fucking stupid idea.

"To hell with it, do your worst."

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Lens of Sanity

And so we have come full circle. I believe I have set up all of the Chekhov's Guns into a nice big Chekhov's Barrage. Voldemort is up next, it's clobbering time.

"And thus did Lord Voldemort die by Harry Potter's hand" –  
DisobedienceWriter

June 22nd 1996: Forest, Behind Greater Hangleton  
Mission Clock 00:00, 11:48 Sidereal Time

Here it is Harry, are you ready for this? No backfiring wand this time, no more getting hit with Killing Curses, just you, and him. Are you good enough?

I set my Mission Clock to Zero purely out of habit, and look around the clearing. The Hangleton Manor house in which Tom is almost certainly residing is somewhere over the hill. Couldn't tell you where, he's had one of his guys stick a Fidelius on it, funny but I don't think he could cast one himself.

Never really struck me as the overly trusting type for some reason.

I've seen a couple of the man's fights in a Pensieve when I was preparing. This is always a good idea when you have the opportunity. Though for the first time I find myself doubting that particular piece of good sense. It might be easier on me had I not known what I was up against.

You may have heard that he is the most formidable Dark Lord in history, and then kind of wondered to yourself as to how these things can be measured against one another. For one thing, two Dark Lords sitting in a room together, equals a fight, in which one of them dies. So how does one compare him to say, Emeric the Evil from centuries ago?

Unfortunately, I've fought a few particularly nasty pieces of work over the course of my life. Some have actually gone down pretty hard, I lost my arm once upon never ago, so I know what dangerous people look like.

Watching the Dark Lord Voldemort, full title with no insulting nicknames, watching him actually going at it is nothing short of terrifying. I've never seen anything like him. And don't go on about how I killed him when I was seventeen, I didn't, Dumbledore patsyed me into it and I didn't even try to land a curse.

It's not just Ritual enhanced speed, or toughness, or colossal magical core, but the horrifying command of magic he seems to display with ease.

A few minutes ago I shot off Prongs, quite politely informing him of my whereabouts, he will have seen the Memory Sphere of my Duel with Dumbledore so he knows I'm no pansy.

However I'm not going to Duel him. I have no intension of doing this honourably. This is the real world. Don't start fights because fights, real fights, are not about honour, or glory, or retribution.

In a real fight, the winner is the one who is left standing.

As he enters the clearing we lock eyes, Red and Green. There are no words.

I take to the air.

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He rather predictably attempts to "Avada Kedavra" me, which honestly, I actually find insulting. You don't use Killing Curses against skilled opponents. Do you see me trying to land a fucking 'Stupefy,' no you do not!

So I effortlessly conjure a mini shield about the size of my palm, embossed with my kickass new crest. Yeah, I've changed my mind, I like the thing better than my old one.

It shatters to rubble and I wandlessly banish the shards. This is what I was teaching Neville yesterday afternoon; 'Conjure and Clout.' You conjure a solid shield in the path of the curse and wandlessly banish the rubble at your opponent. Twenty minutes of practice a day, six days per week, for ten years.

Feel free to shoot it at me all day, you'll never come close.

The fourteen disillusioned, poison tipped needles I'd positioned north, south, east, west, top, bottom, and all eight diagonals, race toward his midair position.

He's skewered on all sides, needles everyone, lancing straight through his body. Unforgivable Green? Pathetic.

Yep, he's dead.

That was easy.

I'm ever so glad I managed to access our Soul Bond connection long enough to get 'Flight' though. I've wanted to be able to do this ever since escaping my Dursley Prison, y'know, the sky fight where Mad-Eye died.

You get knowledge piecemeal too, so even though this is my first time, it feels like I've been doing it years. I was right on my assumption, this is something Voldemort invented himself, all as an overcompensation because he's so terrible on a broom.

To think I was worried about having to wait 15 years for that woman living in the Guatemalan Insane Asylum to start designing the only broom I think is better than the Firebolt. And there are/will only be 101 Cloud Pine in existence.

Flight is better.

Faster and more controlled than even my beloved Cloud Pine. Man, for the first time in my life I'm actually glad of my old Soul Bond relationship.

II-SHIT!-II

A massive on surge of indigo wreathed grey decimates the forest beneath where I was just floating. My gods in heaven, if that had hit... holy hell. I suppose he's not quite as dead as I'd assumed. That is so not a good sign.

Who the hell survives fourteen sharpened needles lancing right through their body at all angles?

He sends another huge mass of that scary fucking grey indigo shit at me, and I manage to slash open a 'Severing Void,' a ragged tear in creation my magic holds open, as my opponents magic attempts to force it to close.

All the while I'm discharging enough power to keep myself safe, Voldemort is Simultaneously creating a quintet of what looks like ancient ballistic crossbow bolts, tipped with crimson fire. They arc around the thing I'll call a shield, and unerringly head right for the sweat spot.

I stop holding the Void, it'll take little more than an instant for his magic to heal the wound, but an instant is something, more than enough.

I swoop, twist, turn, and do my best to avoid the bolts, I perform barrel rolls and brave horrendous g-forces to keep from being harmed by the deep red fires.

When I'm safe I turn.

Voldemort is behind me.

"Avada Kedavra"

My world ends in a flash of green.

Damn it all.

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I find myself once more looking down at the Oak and Dragon Heartstring wand Harry bought for me from Master Ollivander. This thing is beautiful, magic just seems so easy now, I never really knew, y'know. Which for an almost 'of age' wizard is probably very unusual. This morning Harry had shaken me awake, told me to get my shit together, and then once I got downstairs, I had the Sorting Hat thrown at me.

"Draw your Sword."

A little on the dramatic side maybe, but it worked, and now I'm holding the same ruby encrusted Sword which he was strutting about with just the other day. It turns out to be the one Godric Griffindor used to stab peasants with, and is imbued with Basilisk Venom from Salazar Slytherin's pet snake.

My team is the same as it was last time; Auror Kingsley, Professor Moody, the clumsy pink haired young woman who I think is also an Auror, the distinguished Ms. Vance, and Luna. And I notice that I just called it my team. In the possessive. Now that is just downright strange, maybe Harry was right and I'll make a half decent Field Herbologist. I was never really going to go into it, I thought maybe I'd open a greenhouse or something instead. But now... yeah, I think I might.

Harry asked us to kill the snake and make a distraction for the Death Eaters, but not get ourselves killed, so we're in this sleepy muggle village called Hangleton, following a bizarre tracking spell he had shown us.

Apparently it's of vast importance that I be the one to kill it. When I asked he said it was because my Chocolate Frog Card has a totally awesome picture of me standing in front of a big dead snake, swinging a big sword around over my head. He mentioned how he was jealous that he couldn't come up with a picture on his own that was better. No matter how hard he tried.

From the rabid intensity in his eyes, I gather he tried very, very hard.

Nodding the signal to Auror Kingsley, I break over the weathered marble gravestone I'm bunkered behind, and unleash yesterdays well practiced spell-chain on our lured Death Eaters.

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"...this obsession with right and wrong is definitely going to hurt your career" – S'TarKan

June 22nd 1996: Forest, Behind Greater Hangleton  
Mission Clock 00:26, 12:14 Sidereal Time

My vision swims back into focus, and I take in my surroundings, as well as the rather surprising fact that I seem to be, of all things, still alive.

I'm covered in a fine peppering of Magicite dust, crystallised magic which you only see where high concentrations of thaumic release are happening for long periods of time. You don't get it in Hogwarts

or the old family homes because they are built specifically to absorb ambient magic to strengthen the wards and walls.

My left hand is ice cold, and by shuffling to my knees I take in the reason why. The black stone on my Gaunt Ring, the Hallow of Cadmus Peverell, is black no longer. Instead it is a murky, and very distinctive, shade of green.

'he wanted to humiliate Death still further, and asked for the power to recall others from Death'

You've got to be fucking kidding me.

There is no way in gods green hell that I can possibly be that lucky. I gave up relying on luck before I turned eighteen for Merlin's sake. I don't go around bellowing 'Appropriate Caution' at people, al a Mad-Eye Moody, but I'm not as far away from it as I'd admit in front of other people.

'he wanted to humiliate Death still further, and asked for the power to recall others from Death'

There is just no way in hell that this has just happened.

Trying to ignore the saturation level of the magic in the air, I scope my eyes left and right, landing on a familiar necklace hanging from a tree branch, and a note in my own hand, carved into the bark.

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I smirk slightly as my "Frango ós" slams brutally into the neck of a black cloaked recruit, one more thing done, and done well, turning I pick up the abandoned sword, and throw it with all my might in the direction of a fleeing Nagini.

All other Death Eaters are down, and everyone watches, as if in slow motion, the Sword of Griffindor tumbles end over end in a wide parabolic arc. It comes to rest point down impaled right through the snakes head.

Okay, I may not have the most self confidence in the world, but even I know that was pretty damn impressive.



Even though we were slightly outnumbered, the battle was just too one sided in our favour. An ambush like that had a third of their force down before they even knew what happened, and other than a conjured block of marble to prevent a Killing Curse kissing Luna, it was pretty straightforward.

I don't see how everyone found conjuring those solid shields so hard, it's not like they take all that much power, although I can't get them even like Harry was showing us, it's still clearly a useful skill.

Professor Moody walks up to me, wooden leg clunking at every other step, and gives me a report in an obviously professional manner. Seems we've not lost a single person, and the worst wound will be healed in a day once Ms. Vance get's to St. Mungo's.

"Thank you Professor, I think it is best we link up with the other Aurors now."

He looks at me strangely for the longest time "I was never your Professor lad, and I think it best you start calling me Mad-Eye."

Following my agreement he does an uncomfortable Side-Along Apparition appearing a few miles west, and I'm greeted by a sweating young Auror, who I hazily recall seeing four days ago, when everything changed at the Department of Mysteries.

He gives me a similar briefing, though with markedly less polish, and I learn that the entire Department of Magical Law Enforcement are out in teams, all patrolling the edges of this forest, with strict orders to be abnormally paranoid about their co-workers being under the Imperius Curse.

They are ordered to do nothing, nothing whatsoever, except watch one another, and hold up the thickest Anti-Apparition, and Anti-Portkey wards in history. All organised to keep Harry and He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named trapped in the forest.

My team and I agree to help.

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Beneath my Cloak of Invisibility I stagger toward the 'Null Point' in the Anti-Escape wards, the incredibly difficult to locate point in any

Net which can be gotten through thanks to the nature of their construction. This is a weakness which will not be discovered for another thirty or so years, so I can be confident they will keep Voldemort trapped.

My body is a little banged up from the fall, but other than some deep bruising and a whole load of scrapes I seem to be fine. I guess the trees helped slow my decent or something.

Shaking myself from my thoughts, I check my Display to find out when precisely I was hit with the Killing Curse. Opening the appropriate menu, I check playback and in a soft, pleasing blue the timestamp flashes up:

June 22nd 1996: Forest, Behind Greater Hangleton  
Mission Clock 00:01:02, 11:49 Sidereal Time

No friggin' way, after 58 years of life, large parts of it fighting fuckers like him, I only last 62 fucking seconds. That is the single biggest bad sign I've ever seen. I need a drink.

A silent crack and I make my way back to the room Hermione and I shared last night, good times, and more good times to come once this war is over. Applying the appropriate healing spells, and downing a broad spectrum potion I set about messing with my Display, preparing for the upcoming fight.

The note my future self had carved into that tree read 'You Know You Want Too,' and as it had the future analogue of my Time-Turner hanging right next to it, I can be pretty sure I know what I'm going to do. As well as why the saturation level of magic in the air was so gods damned high.

If I spin back one hour and hover behind the Dark Lord right as he's about to AK me, I can shoot him in the back. Simple plan. Simple plans are best. I like how honourable it is too, nobody can ever doubt I know the difference between right and wrong.

The Unspeakables who study time regularly made me promise not to do things like this with a Time-Turner, the pansies all seem to think having multiple versions of oneself occupying the same space is dangerous, however the very first occasion I used one was in a battle against Dementors where I saved my past self.

They always say that it's impossible, that if my claim ever actually happened that it was a fluke, and I won't be able to do it again. But I say that I managed it once so I must know what I'm doing.

They never think that is a good rationale for doing it though.

Which is why every time I come up with a new argument for 'abusing' my Time-Turner they shout at me for the longest time, then make me promise not to do whatever insanity I'd thought of.

Bumps and bruises healed I'm back in full fighting shape, so I collect my things and wrap myself in the Cloak, then spin-back and make my way to the battle zone. I'll be in for a bit of a wait.

Eventually the ghostly image of Voldemort which is outlined on my Display is about to match the real Voldemort that is charging a once and again Killing Curse. I race toward his future location with as much speed as can squeeze out my newfound abilities of Flight.

The spell I'm going to use is a nasty little bit of magic, to be used against stationary targets as it is awfully slow moving, and a mobile target could quite easily sidestep it without much trouble. But what it lacks in delivery time, it more than makes up for in punch. And travelling as fast as I am will only do good things for the magic's momentum.

"Singularis Nex" I roar at the last possible instant.

A mote of pure darkness shoots from my wand, connecting squarely with the centre of my adversaries back. As I peel off to escape the deadly wave, a huge cylinder of blackness erupts from the bursting ball and engulfs the man in malevolent energy.

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"...of those few, the half who weren't already insane, soon would be." – Less Wrong

June 22nd 1996: Forest, Behind Greater Hangleton  
Mission Clock 01:01, 11:49 Off-Sidereal Time

The spell clears and Voldemort is in great shape, virtually no damage, though his entire back is monochromatic. He's in great shape and he's pissed off, as is shown by the wicked spell-chain he is tossing at me.

Hell, to call this thing a spell-chain is to insult it, for Merlin's sake the power some of these hexes have behind them is amazing. I recognise a Cascading Immolation Jinx amongst others, and take that as my cue to drop any facade of offence, switching up to precision conjuring and specific shields.

Transhields are good, and small ones will stop an AK, but even low level bludgeoners will turn them into rubble with ease, and have enough force left over to do you harm. I palm, conjure, duck, dodge, and dive, doing everything in my power to avoid the sinister magic coming my way.

I can cast pretty fast, with two wands in my hands I'm damn near unbeatable when it comes to rate of fire, but he's only using the one wand. Shit, I know how he's doing it, I was right he's got to be insane. This is Simultaneous Casting. You can't cast more than one spell at a time, you can fudge it a bit by holding one thing and casting another, or by shooting out a fraction of a second apart, but you can't do two at once. Not without risking a psychological break.

With a lucky swoop and two good dodges, I manage to get off a shot of my own.

"Londaren Cor"

How about a Taste of Sunshine, sunshine. It annihilates his solid barrier and slams into him, sticking slightly as the magic is kind of gooey.

He recovers right away and sends another of his Infernal Spell-Chains, while I go back to solely relying on point defence.

If his mind is damaged enough to pull off Simultaneous Casting I wonder just how many he can do at once. I guess that pondering advanced Thaumology in the middle of the hardest fight of your life is not the best idea, because as soon as this question pops into my mind I take a nasty Concussion Hex to the side of the head.

It was colourless, I have an excuse.

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As I tumble and attempt to right myself gigantic roar breaks out behind me, and I throw on the Cloak and listing I make my way toward the Null point, Apparating to Dumbledore Cottage in Godric's Hollow. Strange choice, I wonder why I decided to come here.

This is another of those things I really should have asked about. I always thought the Potter's owned this place and the Ministry had turned it into a war memorial, when it was really Albus' all along, and after its destruction he was the one who donated it. He lived at Hogwarts anyway so it wouldn't matter.

It's easier to put a Fidelius on something smaller, and maybe dad didn't want to be the ancestor everyone remembers as the one who lost Potter Place.

Trudging inside I take a few minutes to verify there's no lasting harm, not even a concussion which is a pleasant surprise amongst this morning's mostly unpleasant surprises. Even better news is I lasted, not 62 seconds but 304 seconds, quite the improvement even if I barely made it past five minutes.

As I take a seat on a sofa which was once used by a twenty one year old Lily Potter, I take out my Time-Turner and stare at it as I sip slowly on a healing potion. Time-Turners are really just wonky kind of sideways versions of space expanding magic, they don't so much as send you back in time as they do stretch out your personal timeline, that's why you're limited to six extra hours.

Yet I seem to instinctively understand something the so-called experts don't really get; the device makes it so that both future you and past you, cause events to happen at the same time, it's a single sweep, with your first self living in a reality in which things you have not yet caused are effecting your experience.

Which is totally garbled and confusing.

I know it is. There is a saying in law enforcement which basically goes; 'of the few who are qualified to investigate cases involving

Time-Turners, the ones who aren't currently insane, soon will be.' This is due to the fact that the universe doesn't care that we can't understand how it works, and it is how I can quote, unquote, 'abuse' my Time-Turner, even when all the experts tell me it's impossible.

You've just got to be careful, and most people are naturally just not careful, which is why they die a lot when using Time-Turners.

The reason this is working is because I have my Hallow, and have taken the opportunity to turn off the function on my Tactical Display which can see through it. I really don't want to see the future me or mes before I catch up to them.

That would likely trigger one of those things that cause other not careful people to die a lot.

The Hallow of Ignotus Peverell does not actually make you invisible, it conceals you, hides you. You cannot see or feel anything done beneath its protection when the true master of the artefact uses it. I, and doubtless Voldemort, use mage-sense all the time, it doesn't make you able to see magic, but you can sense it, and sense people's cores. But cradled in the Hallows arms I cannot see, nor can I feel a person, and neither can my foe.

Unless he owns a directional microphone I suppose, but I suspect he doesn't, and even if he does I didn't see him frantically swinging it around out there so I'm safe.

For some reason I start giggling uncontrollably.

Eventually I spin-back and leave.

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Poking at my feelings I, Junior Auror Benjamin Jenkins, have decided that I am a little out of countenance thanks to the events of the last few days.

This morning began when the Director had conscripted me into manhandling Roberts to Level 5, and stuffing his stunned form in one of Scrimgeour, the new Head of Cooperation's magically expanded desk draws. When I asked why we weren't using magic to get him down there, he said that manhandling was traditional in this

type of situation, and when I asked why he had Vanished the man's pelvis, he said because it was funny.

The Director doesn't seem to like Roberts very much, which is understandable since I've met him, but pelvis vanishing? That's a bit harsh. The guy won't be able to spend any time with his girlfriend for a month. Why not just give him the day off if he didn't want him on this Operation, it would have been effectively the same.

Still, from what I've seen of him he clearly knows the job, even if he sometimes acts like the sixteen year old he actually is. Clear unambiguous instructions, delegation, doesn't take any of the usual crap people throw about at briefings, and I saw him in action at the Rowle Ranch, he didn't actually do much, but I got the impression that he could have been anywhere in that battle at a moment's notice.

The first time I saw the Director's friend I was surprised, 'I am supposed to take orders from this chubby young schoolboy?' But No I think, the Director clearly knows his business, so I do not comment on it and simply relay the information he asked for.

That was when it became obvious, this individual, like the Director himself, is clearly an adult, albeit one who happens to be sixteen years old if he's a day. You could see it in the sureness of his gaze, and the effortless way he expects his orders to be obeyed. A man in short, who is clearly comfortable in his own power.

So now I'm standing here, leading a team, even though I'm barely out of the Academy, and I'm responsible for a whole team ensuring a secure swing between the West and North boarder of the escape wards.

And there is this enormous conclave of magical energy coming from miles away which, though I will not admit it out loud, is scaring the shit out of me.

It surges and I'm lifted fully off my feet.

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"Despite all my lives, all my collective knowledge, Voldemort simply understood, and would always understand, magic better than I could" – Joe

June 22nd 1996: Forest, Behind Greater Hangleton  
Mission Clock 05:38, 12:26 Off-Sidereal Time

Out of the frying pan and into, oh shit look, an identical frying pan. I mean honestly, the fire would have been better, at least then there would have been some variation.

Although this situation is very not good.

I'm flying flat out, maximum speed, any change in my direction, or alteration of my momentum is buffeting tremendous g-forces on my body, yet I cannot let up, I cannot slow down, or ease off even slightly. No, if I could I'd be going faster; faster, always faster, faster whatever the cost.

My enemy is wielding a magic whose danger is matched only by Fiendfyre, the unadulterated threat this stuff poses is staggering. Demon's Light is hell unleashed, dark magic at its finest, one spark and flesh is reduced to ash, to dust, to nothing.

A roiling column of fire, the kind of fire which absorbs light, thin as my wrist it chases me. I duck and dive, roll and spin, down, down through the trees, that's the idea. I slalom for a while, until Voldemort realises there is no need, mere wood is not going to stop this weapon, and so I once more take to the clear air.

All blue skies.

There is a reason our society uses the Interdict of Merlin, and things like this are it. Honest to gods magic is dangerous, all magic is dangerous, but Class Eleven Dark Magic, class eleven, on a logarithmic scale.

Simply put that's what the Interdict of Merlin basically states; that magic is dangerous. If you can't figure something out for yourself, or you are not ready to learn a thing, then you are not ready to be taught it.



This is the one sensible thing I've ever heard come out the mouths of the magical community.

Because magic really is dangerous. If the Normals had a cultural maxim which was similar, they would have kept fission devices out the hands of politicians. But as it stands they have incompetent elected officials with the power to destroy the world. It's not like this kind of thing hasn't happened before. But hey, the Elder Mages of old Atlantis had some pretty dangerous stuff too. And that worked out pretty well for everyone didn't it.

Except for the whole Cataclysm thing anyway.

That is neither here nor there, but I'd much rather be there than here, where I'm outrunning fucking Demon's Light. I'm so bloody glad I never wear armour, the stuff is too bulky and I find it slows me down, and makes dodging harder. Some of the expensive armour was tempting for a while, thick enough to take a free Killing Curse if it's Ironbelly, but if I was wearing any today that little extra weight would have killed me long ago.

I sense oncoming magic at the same instant the Hazard Assessment does, but I'm forced to take whatever it is or have my body burned to dust.

Agonising pain grips me as my left is sheared completely away, and with it still gripping the Elder Wand too. I spy a pink filament, tangling now that it has successfully achieved its purpose. Ribbon Severing Charm then, good aim Tom my boy, I might not have been able to pull that one off given the speeds and the erratic flight path.

Another momentous explosion rockets through the air, thaumic pressure wave slapping me across the back, and the threat posed by the horrendous magic drops away.

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Concealing myself from detection I grumpily retrieve my separated arm, once the bleeding is staunches at least. 'That's it, I'm sick of this shit.' Voldemort is invincible, I humbly cede this world to him as unquestioned overlord, and ruler of all he surveys.

He's not that bad of a guy when you get to know him I'm sure, maybe if I kill Rodolphus I can get a Marriage Contract with Bella. She's a bit of a mess right now but thanks to the awesome plan I had, I know a bunch of purging rituals which will do her wonders, and I've seen a photograph of her when she was younger.

Two words; Smokin' Hotbody.

And Mrs. Bellatrix Aspheart, man that has an awesome ring to it.

Don't get me wrong, I've hit my new lord and master loads of times, military grade curses just wash over him like they were mildly annoying. Maybe, maybe he finds them mildly amusing. I sure as fuck would if I was the current overlord, and one of my minions was showing me a cool new trick.

I make sure to take no more air with me than necessary, and so my Disapparating crack is about as audible as my heartbeat.

I've visited many fun tourist destinations today, starting with the House of Black, then the war memorial at Godric's Hollow, for a bit of nostalgia I trudged through the Forest of Dean for a while, and then I went and swam around in the fountain in front of Potter Place for some reason, I honestly couldn't tell you why.

I took a stroll to visit my new friend Healer Stanhope, I didn't know him in the old timeline, and he yelled at me while he was restocking my potion supplies, apparently the budget for the next two months Skele-Gro has been used up and he thinks I have something to do with it.

Glad he doesn't know about Roberts yet, but the man used to be my boss, I couldn't help it.

So now I've appeared here, right in the middle of Tottenham Court Road, in plain view of all the Normals. I ignore the two people who find a person appearing out of nowhere odd, and then the few more people who seem to think a man carrying his own severed arm is strange.

No, I don't care about the Statute of Secrecy, these fools are going to be wiped out by my master any day now. I'm sure of it.

I stride authoritarily into a building with a sign on a black background with red boarder, and written in bold golden letters proclaiming the establishment 'THE TOTTENHAM.'

"Pint of Carling please." I smile cheerfully at the attractive barmaid as I set down my arm on the bar.

It's not all that long past noon, but this is a Saturday so there are a few people here, and they all seem to find me fascinating for some reason. Oh, that's right, I'm wearing robes, and I have a declaration patch on my arm which is in the form of a Griffon and Serpent, and the thing is Animated, and maybe the bloodstains and cuts and things are unusual, and maybe carrying what is clearly my own severed limb around with me is something of note.

When she asks for the money I realise I don't have any on me, not a problem, I whip out my wand, not that one, although she is quite attractive, and conjure a neat stack of crisp twenty pound notes. Those of you using pieces of paper printed by a privately owned company as currency, should perhaps rethink the wisdom of your actions.

Taking a deep drink I let out a satisfied sigh, "You guys all know that magic is real, and that there is a whole society of witches and wizards living amongst you in secret right?"

Ordering a second drink I get on with reattaching my arm. "Magic?" one of them eventually asks.

"Yep. Magic wands, cauldrons, curses, I even own a broomstick called a Cloud Pine on which I fly around the countryside. Magic is great, did you know we have a potion that can cure AIDS for the equivalent of twenty or thirty pounds?"

Arm back on I down a small potion, which tastes horrible, so I'm forced to chase it by downing my second pint. I order a third but take my time with it because stomach is feeling a bit bloated.

"So are witches all ugly hags with warts on their noses too?"

"Not at all my good man, the love of my life is a witch, and the most beautiful creature in creation, her parents are arseholes though. She

always tells people they are dentists, because everyone always just goes, 'oh, that's nice' before moving on to the next question."

I kick back after casting a cushioning charm on the barstool, I'm actually having a great time. I outline how I'm a boy hero, and I'm fighting an evil wizard, and telling all about the war, and about magic. Honestly, why don't people do this more often, it's great fun.

Eventually it's time to leave. I thank the attractive barmaid, and leave the stack of twenties on the bar. Then I speak in a loud, carrying voice "Right Ladies and Gentlemen, this has been a publicity stunt for a new movie 'Harry Potter and the School of Magic,' remember to look out for it in the upcoming months." I vanish from sight with the Cloak, and then across the sands of time.

One last time.

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"There will be seven Harry Potters moving through the skies tonight..." – JKR

June 22nd 1996: Forest, Behind Greater Hangleton  
Mission Clock 06:52, 12:40 Off-Sidereal Time

I think I'm starting to get into it. It's fine, this is just like all the other times you've gone toe to toe with some powerful wanker. It's just the same, only faster, and harder. All you've got to do Harry is up your game a bit.

I went with Dual Wand Duelling again, though I heavily dislike doing it with the Deathstick because it makes me feel like a fiddler crab, all weighted down on one side, there is no balance there.

I gave up all pretence at defence for a while, just to mix things up, both trading huge numbers of curses as we clash and swoop around one another. I was using Priori Incantatem to good effect for a while there. I even landed a Gravity Banner which was awesome, ten times gravity and hitting the deck with an acceleration of 98 meters per second squared; caused quite the dint I can tell you.

This is my last shot, toss the dice and watch them fall, no more second chances. Hell, this is my seventh chance, and only now do I

feel like I'm getting any traction at all. Not much of an improvement, but it's something.

Oh, no. I'd groan if I could spare the energy, or my mouth didn't taste so worryingly like copper.

Fiendfyre.

I hate Fiendfyre. Why did he have to use Fiendfyre? Can't we go back to playing with Demon's Light, that was fun, I remember it distinctly, I was having a blast.

And wouldn't you know it but I'm trapped too, lying in a nicely placed crevice far from the 'Null Point,' and positioned just right so I can't attempt to escape, or outrun it. Even if I thought I could outrun it. This is just perfect, I'm going to get consumed by fucking Fiendfyre, and there is sod all I can do about it.

Well, I had a good run, had two amazing girlfriends, before they both died, had a bunch of kids, before I killed them all. Things could have gone better, but then again they could have been a lot worse too.

'Potter, shut the fuck up.'

'What? I'm meeting my death with grace and poise, it's the civilised thing to do.'

'I said shut the fuck up. You're Harry fucking Potter for crying out loud, are you really going to go down this easily?'

'Easily? You're mental, nobody I've ever heard of even comes close to this guy. Merlin and Janus himself would get boot stomped even if they were working together.'

'Harry, do it.'

'What?'

'You know what.'

'No.'

'Do it you insignificant fuck, do it.'

'Fuck you, No!'

'...'

'I'll set up a ménage à trois with a French Veela and a classically beautiful English girl.'

'That is a pretty good motivator Harry.'

'Do it.'

'...'

'Fuck it, why the hell not.'

I take the Hallow of Antioch Peverell in my right hand, I have a few moments as the flames race toward me. This is called the Deathstick for a good reason, it's escorted more people through the Veil than any other wand in history, and it is no stranger to what I'm about to do.

Exhaling I begin to carve. I've said it before, wands are just portable ways to carve runes, and wandwork for the most part is about getting the runes out there, fast and accurate.

I'm carving into the very fabric of the world, creation itself, digging furrows into the universe and forcing it to my ends. This is a particularly vicious looking rune too, signifying destruction and chaos. Blasts of fire hotter and stronger than any seen on this side of death, all jagged edges and pain filled malevolence.

Sub-audibly I verbalise one word, a word in no language the human race knows, but is widely speculated to be one of the few remnants of long dead Atlantis:

"Az-Reth"

I unleash Fiendfyre.

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What they don't tell you in stories, is that when the sexy young hero is doing some sexy young hero stuff, he's scared out of his fucking mind. And holy gods in heaven but I'm only about one second away from literally shitting my pants.

The first instant was the hardest, we were each smacking the other down, a fight for control on a knife edge, while deep in the throes of a hurricane of mountainous proportions. But that makes it seem easy.

It wasn't, I assure you.

Fiendfyre is sapient magic, sapient as in, alive. Not just intelligent but a real living thing fashioned from the chaos and destruction of magic and the universe, let loose by none save fools. It's coved by the Interdict of Merlin, and the first time I saw it, unrestrained and lethal, was from a seventeen year old named Vincent Crabbe, and why in the name of all that is evil someone would teach it to him, I will never understand.

The first instant was the hardest, but the second was not much better.

Eventually I find myself on top, foot on its neck and a bolt through the head. Complete and total domination, no quarter; you're mine now bitch. The fight is not over of course, it's never over, one instant of weakness, a bare fraction of a moment and it'll be on me, the temporary equilibrium will be gone and the battle will begin anew.

The indistinct magical flaring coalesces into familiar forms and they charge toward my enemy. Funny to think only seconds have passed since I decided to die, feels more like centuries.

Black forms deep as pitch, all with wild insane eyes wreathed in poisonous green, a Ridgeback, a triad of Phoenixes, and a swarm of tiny Fae. Commanding the liquid destruction I once more take to the air, spying a stygian Nundu wrestling with a red and gold Graphorn, until the latter's head bursts in a wash of dissipating heat.

Intent focused solely on the consuming destruction of my adversaries living magic, I feel an incredible pull on my magic, and a rippling in my core. I know a trick, not something many people learn for obvious reasons, but I know how to overload my core. The Big

Finish it's called, going out in a pyre of apocalyptic fury, the name is apt.

An instability in my core is not a good sign, it's what you aim for when you're playing your last card, but I only want to keep the Fiendfyre flowing, so I focus internally, stabilising the runaway magic.

A golden Chimera is ripped from existence by a midnight Phoenix and a team of Fae, as the sapient blackness coalesces to overwhelm Voldemort's puny fire. 'You wanted Fiendfyre Tom, don't be a pussy when someone else is playing in the big leagues.'

All my fyres burst and reform into thousands upon thousands of Pixies, Thestrals, Imps, and Abraxan. Thousands more all splash themselves like the waves of the North Sea onto the cold hard shoreline of Scotland, winning, defeating him utterly.

I demand the fyres dissipate, and they do so at my command. Immediately.

Okay Lord Voldemort, meet Harry James Potter.

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Mad-Eye, Luna and I have been working together pretty well. We've been here for about forty minutes, ever since the battle in that graveyard. I had split the team so it's only us three, then sent the rest to patrol between me and the leader of those Auror's on the North-West corner.

Not much has happened, no attacks, nobody going berserk because they are under the Imperius Curse. It should be boring.

It's not.

There is this huge magical presence two or so miles from here, and there are intermittent explosions which, if we can hear that loudly from here, must be immense. The exact location of these blasts, I have concluded, keeps changing. They are never in the same place twice. Apparently this has been going on for around a full hour, though we missed the start because we were distracting the Death Eaters and killing a snake.



Suddenly it's like the amount of magic in the air cascades in both power and intensity.

The colossal surge lifts me fully from my feet.

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That's it isn't it. It's so obvious, I can't believe it took me this long to work it out. It's like I've known it the whole time, only never acknowledged it.

All the magic I have mastered, all those Spell-Chains, Dual-Wand-Duelling, Wandless Magic, and Precision Casting. All the destructive spells covered by the Interdict of Merlin. The years of experience gained working with the ICW and as Director of the MLE. My mastery of powerful magical items.

They all come together and match this person, this threat. Ritual enhanced body, colossal magical core, and total lack of morality. I equal it, that's what the Oracle meant. Sweat Merlin's ghost, I'm equal to an Immortal in the finest traditions of old.

It's something I heard once long ago, a saying of sorts; 'what do you want from life; a shot at the title, or a seat by the band.' After I finished school I quit, I didn't want to play anymore, too much fighting, too much struggle. So I did, I kicked back and just let everything slide, all I'd ever wanted was to have the quiet life really, fun and relaxation; in short a seat by the band. But my negligence let the wars start, and I lost so very much.

Screw it, I can't let what Dumbledore did to me fuck up the world. You want a fight Lord Voldemort, fine. I'm taking you out, because the Title, the Belt, its mine.

Although I don't notice it my magic flares to never before seen levels, I don't come up with a plan, I don't need a fucking plan. This Dark Lord is going down hard, and he's going down now.

Both wands in hand Phoenix and Thestral start unleashing spells, I don't even bother thinking about which ones, everything just drops away. It's just me, and the magic. And boy, is the magic eager. It leaps across the gulf and smashes into whatever the threat puts in its way. Harrowing speed, hammer strokes of power behind it.

Intent and magic focused to a single objective; stop this person.

It is not malicious, or nasty, any dark magic used has the intent to save fuelling it, and the thunderous hellstorm of force crashing toward him is all-consuming, enough to engulf even this mighty foe.

Voldemort does not last long.

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"He's still alive!" I explode a disbelieving laugh.

How in the name of-, how, just how?

He's not very alive, I suppose that's something. Only has one stump, not even a full arm, both legs are gone, the eyes have popped, and the neck is broken. But it's lying there on the soft mossy floor still somehow alive.

My Display gives me some advice, and with a shake of my head I grab what's left of the self styled Dark Lord, and fly at breakneck speed to the Null point. Loudly cracking to my office, give me a break I'm tired, and this is the closest Apparition point to my destination. I race toward the lift and hit the button for Level 9.

Muzak is playing.

There are two kindly, almost elderly women sharing a conversation.

"Afternoon." I nod with exhausted politeness. What else could I do? My entrance didn't even slow their conversation.

Muzak is playing, in all its muffled, one-speakered glory.

A fucking agonisingly long two minutes passes, and I think Voldemort is beginning to recover. I sprint down the corridor, toward the room with the rotating doors. "Death Chamber!" I roar in desperation, and they rotate at my command.

Yep, definitely beginning to recover.

I can feel wiggling, as I pitch him with the last of my strength through the Execution Veil. The instant he crosses the border between this world and the next I think it's finally over, and a concussive wave of force takes my legs from under me.

I'm heading for the arch.

Everything goes dark.

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"The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord..." – JKR

June 22nd 1996: Ministry of Magic, Level 2, Magical Law Enforcement, Medical  
13:33 Sidereal Time

"Harry is dead"

"What? No!" Hermione sounds devastated. I'm quite glad I made such an impression in only a few days.

At least I'm not at Kings Cross again, that would be embarrassing, the universe implying I have like no imagination.

"Yes, he is dead and there is nothing you can do to stop it little girl."

Although knowing my luck I'd have guessed I'd end up in at Heathrow or a Portkey Terminal or something.

There is a scuffling "Get the hell out of my way, I am going to kill him." I feel a weight across my face, and I find it difficult to breath. My eyes crack open and in a horrified burst of realisation I figure out that someone is trying to smother me with a pillow. I struggle weakly but I've had a very hard day and I don't have all that much strength left in my body.

Eventually I have someone come to my rescue and remove the assailant, one who turns out to be an incensed Astoria Malfoy.

"Where exactly in the plan did it say 'challenge Albus Dumbledore to a Duel in front of the Wizengamot' can you answer me that Harry, where did it say to do that?"

"I needed to capture my wand." I answer perfectly reasonably.

She is not in the least bit happy with this statement. "And why exactly could you not have done one of the five easier methods of claiming the wand? 'Expelliarmus' in the back for example."

I just roll my eyes "Never one to study much wandlore were you Astoria. The method of the taking is very important." She's being all ridiculous and stuff. See she even looks like she's about to have an aneurysm, mental.

"Okay Harry, fine. Let us say I buy that, which I do not for one minute by the way, but let us say that I do..." I'm just nodding along in a benign and grandfatherly kind of way "...Did you not promise, multiple times in fact, that unless you have a very good reason to do otherwise, your first choice when fighting Voldemort would be to set up an ambush at 'The Ossuary.' You would have fifty people slinging spells at him, remember?"

"I may have, but who's to say Amelia would even let us use her Ancestral Home."

"YOU DID NOT EVEN ASK!" she screeches at like five million decibels.

I judiciously refrain from commenting on her lack of decorum "And in point of fact I did actually have a good reason to fight him on my own, and not use an ambush."

"If you say what I think you are going to, I swear I will not be held accountable for my actions..."

"People would die in an ambush, doing it on my own would prevent extra loss of life."

She takes three, long, slow, deliberate, breaths. Then takes a final deep inhalation, filling her lungs to maximum capacity.

"XXX-XXXXX-X-XXXXXX!"

There is a bit of a silence before I make a sound.

"You kiss your husband with that mouth Astoria?"

"I am going to kill you Harry."

"You're just like my annoying Phoenix, he never lets me do fun things either."

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Eventually she calms down enough to start acting reasonable and I ask "Okay I'm alive, fine. I never seem to die anyway, but how in the hell are you all alive, and furthermore, how are you all here?" I notice she takes a bit of time deciding if she's going to answer me or not, before she seems to come to the right decision.

"You know how true prophecies create a fixed point in the timeline, one which will always happen even if, because of the wording, we do not understand exactly what happened..." Yeah, she's gone over this enough times "...And I found that knowing, or not knowing, your own prophesy creates kind of a firm point which is similar. And I used that to get you back earlier."

"Yes. I woke up in the Department of Mysteries four days ago when the true wording was denied me."

"Only four days? ...Not too shabby." She says it grudgingly, but any praise is rare from the woman.

"Well after I sent you back your body looked like it had been kissed by a Dementor, it kind of lay there and did not move. And saying as we were all still alive, I surmised that it had worked and I had separated the trousers of time so that history where we were would stay on course down our leg, and history where you went would go down the other leg, and hopefully change for the better."

I kind of wince, this isn't going to be good.

"Trousers of time?" the people in the room ask as I refuse to make eye contact and start rubbing my temples.

"You did not tell them that did you..." it isn't really a question.

"Shut up Astoria" I uselessly plead.

"...trousers of time was the only explanation our big damn hero over there could understand. Out of curiosity how did he explain it?"

They look to one another before replying "He, he talked about node branching points, parallel timelines, and alternative causality."

Astoria just laughs "None of which he understands at all. He was probably saying it that way because using such a silly metaphor ruins his credibility."

I attempt to move onto more productive line of conversation "None of this is explaining how you're here though is it?"

"It was pretty easy if you are as attractive and talented as I am..." Humble, that's the way to describe Astoria. Though she does talk about Arithmancy concepts that even other Masters don't fully understand "...I used a faint connection between your body in the old universe, and the sixteen year old thing you are wearing now. You know, I believe you are taller."

"I am, three inches. Keep explaining."

"Oh, certainly. I used the connection and created what is best described as a portkey, though it is nothing of the kind, and squeezed us through a very small space between one universe and the next. Incidentally the overpressure wave threw you into the walls of the stone archway, knocking you unconscious, and we were forced to bring you up here for treatment."

Hmm, okay that makes a kind of sense. I do have one question though "So why did you come through now, no part of the prophesy said anything about my killing this Dark Lord, it only mentioned my needing to remove the Scar Horcrux."

She ponders for a while "Yes, that is strange, I was expecting to come through the instant you removed it. Perhaps ensure you followed the plan I outlined for you a little closer than you actually did." That last came out a bit hard.

Frowning young Sirius chimes in "Maybe it was the line 'marked as an equal,' not only was that designating you a Horcrux, but by killing Voldemort you proved a second meaning?"

Prophecy is always like this, all speculation and no goddamned facts.

"Fuck it, let's go with that. Anything else?"

"At least we do not have to experience the Balescream."

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The way I see it there are two types of friends you get in life, there's the 'Yeah whatever, so long as it doesn't inconvenience me' type, and there is the 'Oh my gods, you killed him. But don't worry, I'll hide the body and lie to the police' type. Unfortunately Astoria is one of the latter. I say unfortunately and you might get a bit confused, the latter is clearly better isn't it? No it friggin' well isn't! Because the latter type can do all kinds of shit that most of your friends can't, and you'll forgive them anyway.

Astoria and I basically hang about in the same social circle, she was always screwing with my plans for the Wizengamot, we went to the same highbrow functions, she was on the Hogwarts Board of Governors, hell, her son married my daughter, so we'll soon have to fight over who gets to be the worst influence on our collective grandchild's life.

Back to the present, Astoria Malfoy has just said "At least we do not have to experience the Balescream."

And that isn't a good word. You can't just go around using words like Balescream. I can't stand idly by and have people going around using words like Balescream in my presence, it set a bad precedent.

"Balescream?" I say flatly, very, very flatly.

"Do not worry about it, it is not going to happen now that we are here."

The thing about words like Balescream, is that they just yell out, at the top of their lungs, badness. A whole world of badness, on top of malevolence, on top of someone having just kicked you in the groin.

Balescream is not going to be a happy word.

"Humour me."

"Well, when I was doing all the Arithmancy to get you back in time, I found that there was a really unlikely eventuality that I did not think you would wish to know about. It was incredibly unlikely, so it was nothing really to worry about, around one in fifty at worst."

I calmly accept this explanation, then calmly ask "Just out of interest, what is this incredibly unlikely eventuality?"

"Erm-," Oh, she said erm did she? Astoria, the woman who never stutters, or finds herself at a loss for words. "You see, there was this, really, really, low possibility if the old universe was destroyed, then when you got back up to the end of August 2038..."

I'm forcing more effort into my trademark glare than I ever have in my life, and I even get Astoria to blanch, which is quite the accomplishment as the woman is notoriously immune to The Gaze.

Rallying she continues "...You would get back up to the end of August, when you were throwing your little hissy fit and calling my brilliant plan 'such a stupid idea,' you get back there, and then creation itself would kind of scream out in agonised pain, and sort of unravel. Destroying absolutely everything, everywhere, ever. Maybe unmaking everything that has ever happened in all of history."

I now have a word which I dislike even more strongly than Doom; Balescream. I knew when she said it the first time, it was not going to be a happy word.

"I'm going to make you pay. Right after I revenge myself on Fawkes, I'm going to make you pay."

"Yeah, what you going to do? I was in Slytherin remember, and you were not. There is no way a 'Harry Potter guaranteed' plan is going to fly, not when stacked up to my planning abilities."

I don't care, I'm going to make her pay. This is now a very high priority.

"And you didn't tell me because..." I say leadingly, even though it's totally obvious.



"You would not have gone through with it if I had. Tricking you into doing the dangerous part was always the best way to further my plans. You make a very accomplished patsy Harry."

"I am so totally going to make you pay." She just rolls her eyes.

I hate my friends.

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"He was constantly surprised, even after all these years how these little things made the two women so happy" – Clell

June 22nd 1996: Ministry of Magic, Level 2, Magical Law Enforcement, Medical  
13:52 Sidereal Time

"Is there any good news?"

"Rose gave birth about a month ago." That gets my attention and I gracefully leap out of bed, crashing into a cart of medical supplies. I guess I'm more tired than I thought. Extricating myself I head for the auburn haired woman mentioned, and snag the thing in her arms, incidentally body-checking Rose into falling on her arse.

At her complaint I state "You poison my line with that of the Malfoys what do you expect. What's the little demonspawn's name by the way?"

"Circe" Astoria chimes in amused.

"Circe; hmm has a nice ring to it I suppose; The Dark Lady Circe Malfoy."

"My daughter is not going to be evil." Rose explodes indignantly.

"Not with that attitude." The woman is right.

"I wonder if it has any decent anagrams..." I muse as Rose just glares at me, Scorp is hiding his own amusement from his wife, clever lad "...Foamy Circle, The Dark Cleric Foamy... Nar that's silly. The Fay Cleric of Om, she'd have to name her evil base 'Om' though,

I suppose that could be a problem. What the hell is a cleric anyhow?"

"That's it, give me back my daughter."

"Never in life, I must give aid on her inevitable path to evil."

She chases me around the room for a while with me sternly refusing to give her daughter up. I have, or at least had as many of them died, eight children. Many of them dying was less than good but the little dash between the two dates on their gravestones is what matters.

So I have eight children, and a massive swarm of nieces, nephews, grandchildren, godsons, goddaughters, and close family friends all with their own. You can probably guess I'm pretty good with kids. Anyway, the trick I worked out is to intentionally ruin their lives, rather than have it happen by accident.

It's also far more fun when you do it on purpose.

"Hermione save me from this irritating banshee, come hold your not quite granddaughter." Everyone finds this scene hilarious bar the near apoplectic redhead, who looks as though she'd be slinging hexes had I not been holding her precious bundle of evil.

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"Have you seen Neville?" Astoria asks walking into the room.

It's been a little over a day and things are calming down.

"Yeah, I know! It's been bugging the crap out of me since I got back."

I've been thinking since the fight and I'm incredibly glad I didn't kill everyone, I would have missed them, maybe even Astoria.

"He's young, he's fat." she says incredulously.

Standing behind and out of her line of sight Neville hears this. His confidence plummets visibly, and a look of horrified self loathing crashes over him. I hastily reassure my friend. "Sorry mate, but you can't see it from our perspective. We're used to seeing Neville

fucking Longbottom, world renowned Herbologist, and Greater Daemon slaying super badass. Who has two wives, and can walk into any room on earth confident in the knowledge he is the scariest person there. It's dead jarring to see you this young."

"What? Two?" clearly confused, probably still recovering from the unexpected, and needlessly harsh comment.

Astoria asks me "Did you tell anyone anything at all Harry?"

"I left a couple of hints but I was going to let them work stuff out for themselves." She just frowns at me.

"Yes Neville, Hannah Longbottom continues the Longbottom line, and Susan Bones the Bones line, simple. Do not get yourself twisted out of shape, you know full well your Grandmother had a sister wife before you were born."

Astoria may have a soft spot for me but the woman has a multitude of sharp, dangerous, and pointy spots aimed directly at the rest of the world. Was there really any need to tell him that, the guy has not even turned sixteen yet, I was going to try and get him a practice threeway with those two Slytherin girls he took down last time.

"Anyway, did you get any news?" I ask

"Other than a story about you on the front page of a Normal newspaper I believe is called the Sun, Yes. Your little duel caused a category four magical event."

Hermione perks up, and I respond "Really? That's badass."

"It was that event which, not only was it felt by Magicals in northern France, but caused a Lay Line shift. Consequently the line going through Somerset has been altered." She seems annoyed by something.

"What's category four?" The brunette enquires.

"Thaumic surge, the destruction of Stonehenge's magic was category four" I answer distractedly.

"The Lay Line going through Somerset is the same one which goes through Wiltshire."

"Oh that's too funny. Malfoy Manner?" at her nod I burst out laughing, even ending the war early I still annoy the Malfoys.

"Indeed." Oh she's not a happy bunny about this, but you gotta admit it's a classic.

"Lighten up woman, things are going great. You want to see the fight? I had the MLE Pensieve brought up just to watch it." Thirteen people, the maximum capacity, gather round and dive into my memory.

A little over an hour later we all stand around looking at each other

"Sixty-two minutes, damn."

"I can't believe you said that Harry." Hermione is just looking at me like I'm a nutter.

"What? If you'd looked closely you'd have noticed I did actually wince at the ridiculous quote right when I said it."

Neville doesn't get it but that's understandable, so Hermione repeats my words "He said; 'You can't win Dark(th) if you strike me down I shall become more powerful than you can possibly imagine' ...which has to be the stupidest thing I've ever heard in my life." I really am just as bad as those damned Independents sometimes, but in my defence I had just finished trying to drown myself in the fountain out front of Potter Place.

"What I wish to know is, what did you do at the end? I have never heard of anyone becoming so much more powerful in such a way."

"I did the Big Finish." She crosses her brows slightly as she knows what I'm talking about but doesn't understand "It just came to me when I was using the Fiendfyre, I cracked my core, although I didn't use it all at once, instead I drained my reserves gradually for those last three minutes."

"That is one of the most dangerous things I have ever heard."

"Yeah, I knew I could pull it off though, just knew y'know? I'm not going to do it again, I think it was mostly fluke and circumstance."

"You should have died in the attempt."

"Is that concern I hear in your voice Astoria?"

"Do not talk so outlandishly Harry."

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"Did you get one?" I ask my once and again love.

It has been two weeks and I've finally recovered enough to get back out doing things, though the case of magical exhaustion I had is being written up as an article in Healing Monthly.

"I got two."

Things are going to be good from now on. All those Diviners blaming me for failing to bring about a thousand years of peace following Dumbledore's meddling in my life have given me enough motivation to see it doesn't all end in Doom again.

"Two, how?"

"I robbed a museum." Well that would work.

"Are you sure Harry, I mean I understand in a logical way but are you sure, sure?"

"Did you enjoy the library Hermione?" From the look on her face I don't need a verbal answer "...This is the Fleur version. We only have to do it the first time, but you have to trust me." She gets a bit of a dreamy look and I continue.

"Okay, make sure we've got everything. Shock Lance?" "Check"

"Length of chain" "Check"

"Dart gun" "Check"

"Running shoes" "Check"

"Two Traditional Veela Wedding Sacks" "Check"

"And what did I tell you to remember most." I demand with authority.

"A Veela is dangerous, and it is a flight risk. Just because its in the Sack doesn't mean I should neglect putting in the boots."

"Good girl."

Our crack is louder as it is an international Apparition. It marks the beginning of what I hope is going to be a better life.

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"...he was finally home" – Deadwoodpecker

October 23rd 2133: City of New Mombasa, East Africa  
18:34 Sidereal Time

Standing on the balcony of my apartment with two beautiful women I'm watching the sun set, backlighting the newly completed Orbital Elevator. It's quite the picturesque scene.

My life really has been incredible, but you don't want to hear about that, you want to know what happened to everyone else.

Well for the most part I don't really want to get into it. For instance I have no clue what happened to Snape, I have a secret fantasy that his bloated syphilitic remains were found having been drowned to death in a toilet by one of his Johns, but I really don't know.

I can hope though.

My Boggart changed, seems finally casting Fiendfyre had gotten me over that particular phobia. Unfortunately they now resemble Ginny. Not this Ginny, last timeline Ginny, this timeline's one is actually quite sweet, even though I'll probably never get over my gut level reaction on seeing her.

Anyway, Ginny lives with her lab assistant, and back in the thirties they decided they wanted kids. She tracked me down and shyly asked for a donation, apparently I'm the only guy she knows who

she could bring herself to ask. Molly eventually convinced me to agree, although the first batch I gave her had far too much saliva in it to be useful.

Circe didn't go evil despite my best efforts, and she pretty much ignores everything I say. She didn't like her anagram, told me there wasn't enough demand for evil, and even learned how to turn into a snake. Silly girl, it never helps.

While we're on that I had some other super good news. In this timeline I'm an Animagus, kickass ritual side-effect, no more taunting from Hermione for years on end about how she is an awesome otter Animagus, whereas I can't so much as transform into a hamster. Fleur gave birth to her first nine months after I learned that, what can I say, I was wicked pleased.

Albus died of old age, and Perce stroked out in his seventies while making love to his wife. Feigning sadness at Perce's funeral was hard, not only was his demise so damn funny, but he'd somehow gotten Audrey pregnant again. Classic Perce.

No, the interesting one is Ron.

You'll never believe what happened to Ron. And I mean Ron, as in Ron Weasley, not one of the other Rons you might know.

Well he must have done some soul searching or something, because he decided to take me up on my offer. Somehow he just barely got the grades required to make it into the Academy. He must have been working with a group a lot when studying. This was one of his major flaws back in the old days, he couldn't work in groups because he always turned into a prat if he didn't get his own way. But he must have dealt with it enough to study with others and get high enough marks.

So I keep my promise, and even though he doesn't talk to me more than absolutely necessary, he does become one of my Aurors. And I put him on the fast track like I said I would. He then quits as soon as he achieves Senior Auror and moves to South America.

About ten years later, he does one of those classic princess rescues. Dragon guarded castle, high tower, the whole thing. And the woman

he rescues, who is actually, honest to gods, a princess, marries him. She had a super normal sounding name too, like Mary, or Sue or something. And the only fact I know about her, is that she is a Magical Animagus taking the form of a Unicorn.

Go Ron!

I always, totally didn't suspect, he had it in him.

Basically the family just got stupidly huge, and we spent far too much time coming up with new and interesting ways to amuse ourselves. It's been great, I can't help making my once and again comment out loud.

"All is w—"

"I want to ride on the back of a Nundu." The beautiful brunette blurts in to interrupt my train of thought.

"You want to what?"

"Oui, a Nundu. We 'aven't done that before 'ave we?" The equally beautiful blonde agrees, ignoring my question.

"We could get a late night portkey to Egypt tonight." The brunette continues.

Mulling it over for a moment I add "I like it."

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Somemonth 32nd 9999: Ephemeral Kings Cross Station  
99:99 Non-Sidereal Time

I'm at Kings Cross again. Who would have thought it, my mind really couldn't come up with something more imaginative after all.

"Hello Harry James Potter."

My companion is... strange.

"Yo"

Possibly not the most reverent of responses.

"You had an enjoyable time, did you not?"

She's definitely female, exaggeratedly so.

"The best."

Looks like she was designed by an overly lecherous man as it happens.

"I have a job for you to do."

I just cock an eyebrow.

"Pass."

The living smoke, water, or rolling fire, which constitutes her body shimmers from crystal blue, to a slight red. I get the distinct impression she does not like this answer.

"I was not asking exactly. I do not strictly need your consent."

That's a bluff.

"I know enough about this type of thing to be able to tell that you would not have asked if you did not have to. You want this to be a choice. Unless I miss my guess?"

She shimmers from red, to pale green, and loses coalescence for a brief time.

"I went to tremendous effort to hold your second universe in place. You cannot possibly believe a whole new chain of causality can simply pop into existence for free."

I think for a long while. That does have a ringing of truth unfortunately.

"But I did not ask you to do it, so I owe you nothing."

Another pause, this time longer.

"Do you not wish even to know what I ask? Harry James Potter."

I can probably make a fair guess, still...

"Give me the big writing version with pictures."

For some reason this amuses her greatly. The shimmering water and rolling fire which makes up her curves is tinged yellow, as she throatily responds.

"There is a Dark Lord who must not be named, and a boy hero marked by Prophecy."

Hmm.

"That sounds familiar."

She smiles.

"He got himself killed attempting to rescue a Philosopher's Stone."

Huh, amateur.

"And why do you think I would do such a thing once again?"

Yeah, it's pretty obvious at this point what she is after.

"Your Soul has now paid for its crimes on the last stage of its reincarnation cycle. Do this and it is double or nothing, the scores this time can really change."

I knew I'd done something terrible in a past life, I knew it. But now the question you have to ask yourself is, do you really want to do this again Harry?

"I want my gear. And Hedwig. If you can create a whole new universe you can pull that much off too."

Her form once more loses cohesion, and when she eventually collapses back together she answers.

"Very well. Know this Harry James Potter, it will be harder."

Maybe yes, maybe no.

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Lens of Sanity

That's right. Not only is Harry Potter the reincarnation of Anakin Skywalker, a guy who's name still spread fear throughout the whole galaxy a thousand years after his death, but the entire Star Wars Universe is loosely based on a time well before the Rise of Atlantis, before the invention of Wands or Runes.

I set the events based on the Lord of the Rings 6500 years ago, coinciding with the war written of in the three Abrahamic Religions. And set the Atlantics Cataclysm to happen 11000 years ago, coinciding with the end of the last Ice Age.

And the only reason Astoria's time travel idea successfully created a second universe, is because Rand al'Thor got himself killed at the 'Eye of the World,' and a mysterious 'woman' needed assistance.

And best of all, the thing that has me cackling insanely at the very idea, is that none of this can be directly refuted by JK Rowling's seven Harry Potter canon books. The plot holes, or more accurately, plot chasms, are so huge that I can slide all of this through, using alternate character interpretation, and my own runaway levels of rampancy.

So what I've created here is not an AU story, because AU stands for Alternate Universe. The sheer number of universes it touches on, and the avalanche of Harry Potter FanFictions is cuts across, makes this something new, something... different, and sexy. The kind of thing that blinds the eyes, and flash boils the Soul.

This story is a Perpendicular Universe.

Fuck the impossible.